THE JUST FIGURE
SHAPE, HARMONY AND PROPORTION IN A SELECTION OF ANDREW MARVELL'S LYRICS

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The phrase "the just Figure" - a quotation from *Upon Appleton House* - is the central theme of this thesis as it aptly describes Marvell's repeated use of shape, harmony and proportion to suggest morality and virtue. The poet's concern with geometrical imagery is conveyed by the word "figure", which also is another term for a metaphor or conceit. The word "just" suggests not only moral appropriateness, but also mathematical exactness or fit.

The thesis consists of five chapters, each dealing with an aspect of the imagery of shape and form which pervades so many of Marvell's lyrics.

The first chapter, "Moral Geometry", deals with the way in which Marvell uses the imagery of lines, angles and curves. In some poems the lines are curved, as in *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borrow*, where the graceful downward curved line of the hill conveys Fairfacian humility. Symmetry and circularity are discussed in the second chapter. The poet uses the perfect shape of the circle to depict objects which convey a moral significance. Similarly, several of the lyrics are themselves quasi-circular with their closing lines echoing their openings. Chapter Three deals with

liquid spheres. Marvell explores the nature, shape and texture of tears in poems such as *Eyes and Tears* and *Mourning*; and in *On a Drop of Dew* uses the shape of the dew drop to suggest the perfection of the heavenly realm from which it has been parted.

In several of the lyrics, Marvell places a frame around his poems to create an enclosed world in which his poetic creations exist. These enclosed, or framed, worlds are discussed in Chapter Four. The final chapter, "Beyond The Frame", describes how some of the lyrics suggest a move from the world within to the world beyond the frame of the poem. This can either be a movement from confinement to release, or from the seen world to worlds unseen.

Shape, harmony and proportion are the qualities which Marvell uses to convey morality and humility and a vision of the world based on what is, in the various senses of the word, "just".

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PREFACE

The standard text used in the preparation of this thesis is H M Margoliouth's *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell* (Third Edition). All quotations from Marvell's lyrics are taken from this edition. The numbers accompanying verse-quotations are line-numbers unless combined with p. / pp. for page / pages. Where more than one book by the same author has been consulted, this is indicated by citing the year of publication in addition to the page number.

The thesis is concerned only with a selection of Marvell's lyric poetry, not the entire canon. Lyrics are selected on the basis of the extent to which they best illustrate the point being argued, and some of the more commonly anthologised or analysed, such as *To his Coy Mistress*, are not re-examined. Similarly, the limited scope of the thesis and the nature of its central theme are such that the satiric poems do not come under scrutiny.

This thesis could not have been written without the assistance of my supervisor, Dr R F Hall, and I express my gratitude to him for his support and unfailing kindness. I also thank my parents, Sonia and Derek Gardner,

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INTRODUCTION

Much of the ingenuity of Marvell's art stems from an intellectual control of imagery and vocabulary, in which the intellectuality of argument is conveyed by sensuous description and extreme compression of meaning. The poet also shows a consummate ability to equate what Friedman refers to as "visual shape" with moral quality (p.203); and it is this trait which I have sought to describe by the phrase "the just figure".

In *Upon Appleton House*, the son of Sir William Fairfax and Isabel Thwaites

> Who, when retired here to Peace,
> His warlike Studies could not cease;
> But laid these Gardens out in sport
> In the just Figure of a Fort.
> (283-286)

Here the image refers to the fort-like design of the gardens, but I have taken the phrase "the just figure" as the central theme of this thesis as it aptly describes Marvell's repeated use of shape, harmony and proportion to suggest morality and virtue.

Marvell's concern with geometrical imagery is conveyed by the word "figure", which also, of course, is another term for a metaphor or conceit. The word "just" suggests not only a certain moral appropriateness, but also mathematical exactness or fit. So, "the just figure" describes the quality of "secret geometry" - the use of the imagery of shape and form - which I believe pervades so many of the poet's lyrics (Bouleau, p.37).

The first chapter of the thesis is entitled "Moral Geometry" and deals with the way in which Marvell uses the imagery of lines to convey proportion and symmetry suggesting morality, humility and balance. In some poems the lines are curved, as in *Upon Appleton House* and *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow*, where the graceful downward curved line of the "sober Frame" (1) of the house and the "perfect Hemisphere" (2) of the hill bespeak Fairfax's humility. In other poems Marvell uses the imagery of straight lines. *The Definition of Love* describes perfect love in terms of parallel lines which, like the lovers who must accept that ideal love entails an acceptance of the impossibility of consummation, can never meet.

In contrast to *The Definition of Love, Ametas and Thestylis making Hay-Ropes* and *The Fair Singer* describe lines which twist and weave. In the former poem, Marvell uses the image of strands of hay being twisted to make ropes to secure the stooks as a metaphor for being bound by love, while in the latter, it is as though the various strands of the imagery of war, love, hearing, seeing and enchantment are woven into a verbal tapestry.

Symmetry and circularity are discussed in the second chapter. Marjorie Hope Nicolson has indicated that "no poet of the Seventeenth century...used the circle more charmingly than did Andrew Marvell" (p.57); and the image of the circle appears frequently in the lyrics to express divinely inspired harmony and moral proportion. Marvell uses the perfect shape of the circle to depict objects which convey a moral significance such as the heavenly diadem of *The Coronet*, the "golden Lamps" in *Bermudas* and the repeated circular or hemispherical shapes which appear in *Upon Appleton House*. Similarly, several of the lyrics are in themselves quasi-circular with their closing lines echoing their openings and thereby suggesting the beauty and harmony of perfect symmetry and proportion.

From images of circularity, I turn in Chapter Three to discuss liquid spheres. Fascinated by the shape, nature and texture of tears, Marvell explores these qualities, with a variety of tones and styles, in poems such as *Eyes and Tears* and *Mourning*. Perhaps the most lovely liquid sphere, though, is the drop of dew in *On a Drop of Dew*. Its shape suggests the perfection of the heavenly realm from which it has been parted and with which it longs to be reunited.

The drop of dew strives to maintain its perfect shape, seeking to enclose in itself the purity of "its native Element" which it "Frames" (8). In several of the lyrics, Marvell emulates a painter and places a frame around his poems to create an enclosed world in which his poetic creations exist. These enclosed, or framed, worlds are discussed in Chapter Four. It is maintained that the more defined the shape of the space enclosed, the more

perfect is the world described. Similarly, there must be a perfectly balanced correspondence between the enclosed world and its inhabitant. Maria Fairfax in *Upon Appleton House* lives in harmony with her enclosed world while the reciprocity between Damon and his world in the Mower poems is destroyed by the intrusion of Juliana within the frame of the enclosed world.

Also explored in this fourth chapter is the notion of ambiguous space: the poet pretends to deceive the reader about whether he is inside or outside the frame of the poem. He suggests that there is more than one way of seeing and that vision often depends as much on the position of the viewer as on the object to be viewed.

The final chapter, "Beyond the Frame", describes the way in which some of Marvell's lyrics seem to suggest a move from the world within to the world beyond the frame of the poem. *The Match* and *Musicks Empire* create the sense of an overspilling of boundaries and the move from confinement to release. In other poems this movement beyond the frame is a move from the seen world to unseen worlds. The Soul in *The Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure* counters one of Pleasure's temptations by saying:

> If things of Sight such Heavens be,
> What Heavens are those we cannot see?
> (55-56)

The poem depicts the world beyond the frame as a realm of harmonious perfection. Similarly, in *The Garden* the mind can free itself, by the power of creative imagination, to look outside the confines of the garden; and the soul can cast aside "the Bodies Vest" (51) and prepare itself for its journey to a world beyond.

Shape, harmony and proportion, whether within or without the frame of the poems, are the qualities which Marvell uses to convey morality, humility and a vision of the world based on what is, in the various senses of the word, "just".

CHAPTER ONE

MORAL GEOMETRY

Many of Marvell's lyrics depend for their visual impact upon the display of geometric figures. The reader, by contemplation of the pictorial, is led to perceive the conceptual. Leishman remarks on this particularly Marvellian trait and further comments on how it both intellectually excites and visually delights (p. 201).

The opening stanzas of *Upon Appleton House* in particular show Marvell's concern with proportion and symmetry and how a visual display of such balance can suggest morality and humility. The architectural proportion of Appleton House defines Fairfax's character. The definition is presented in much the same manner as an architectural blueprint, by means of lines and curves. Marvell begins by defining by contrast, a technique also used in *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow* where the upward surge of the mountain forms a negative counterpart to the perfectly proportioned hill. Here, the pride of the "Forrain *Architect*" (2) who destroys nature is conveyed by the imagery of upwardly thrusting lines. To give birth

painfully to his grand design this architect "vault(s)" his brain. The columns are raised so high that they can only be viewed by an awkward tilting back of the head with brows raised in an arch: "Whose Columnes should so high be rais'd / To arch the Brows that on them gaz'd" (7-8). How different is the description of the symmetry of Appleton House, which in its limited dimensions and orderly composition (like Nature) encourages humility in the people who enter by its "narrow loop" (30). Here the movement is all downwards. Large men stoop, curving towards the earth in an unawkward display of humility which will serve them well when called upon to enter Heaven. One of the more important words in this fourth stanza is "strait", a word which occurs frequently in the lyrics, usually to convey moral rectitude. Later in the poem Maria Fairfax is described as bestowing "streightness" (691) on the woods, and as the source of Appleton's virtue is complimented on being "more Pure, Sweet, Streight, and Fair / Then Gardens, Woods, Meads, Rivers are" (695-6). In *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow* the trees on the hill have never grown "so streight and green" (56) as under Fairfax's rule. Similarly in *Eyes and Tears,* tears which fall in straight plumb-like lines offer better measure than the "false Angle(s)" of "Self-deluding Sight" (5-8); and in *The Definition of Love* perfection in love is represented by parallel lines while inferior love is "*oblique*" (25).

As Cook suggests, virtue is usually portrayed as having firmness and shape like the drop of dew which keeps its shape and thus its purity, while vice and temptation are soft and shapeless, lacking restraint (p.150). In *A Dialogue Between The Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure* Created Pleasure tempts the Resolved Soul with "downy pillows" (19), "fragrant

Clouds" (27), and offers an excess of all that is "fair, and soft, and sweet" (51). Again in *Upon Appleton House*, the nuns who occupied the old Appleton House deviate from the straight and also delight in a surfeit of unnatural fairness, softness and sweetness. Their devious temptation of Isabella Thwaites and her possessions is by means of words which are "weav'd" (95). They offer to "bend" the Rule which should govern their lives: "And, if our Rule seem strictly pend, / The Rule it self to you shall bend" (155-6). There is no humility in this bending since it is the Rule which must bend, not the person.

Paradoxically, it is the rebuilt Appleton House, not the demolished convent, which is described as a *"Religious House"* (280). Only under Fairfacian ownership is the house perfectly proportioned: its *"Mathematicks"* are *"holy"* and "in ev'ry Figure equal Man" (47-8). Marvell is perhaps referring here to the Vitruvian principles of proportion which so fascinated Jacobean and Restoration architects and poets. Inigo Jones in a marginal annotation to one of his books insisted that "the bodi of a man well proporsioned is the patern for proporsion in buildings" (Ford, p.172). Although the pilgrims of a later age will marvel and smile at the "dwarfish Confines" (38) of such a great man's house, it is a compliment to Fairfax that his house is in perfect proportion to his own size, just as was "*Romulus* his Bee-like Cell" (40). As Colie suggests, "as Romulus' bee-like house was the proper house for a great founder, so this house's scale was the proper one for real heroism" (1970, p.122). George Herbert also describes the dual symmetry of man and his surrounding in his poem *Man:*

Man is all symmetrie,
Full of proportions, one limbe to another,
And to all the world besides:
Each part may call the furthest, brother:
For head with foot hath private amitie,
And both with moons and tides.
(Nicolson, p.21)

Thus, the "*holy Mathematicks*" can "equal man" for, as Rostvig indicates "the square and the circle are the two most perfect geometrical figures, and man is 'universal' in the sense that his proportions reflect those of the universe" (Ricks, p.240). A proud man, however, not content with the perfection of the square and circle, will vainly attempt to square the circle: "Let others vainly strive t'immure/ The *Circle* in the *Quadrature*!" (46-7). Such distortion was equally offensive to Donne whose *Upon the Translation of the psalms by Sir Philip Sydney* notes the affinity of God to the cornerless circle and the folly of those who seek to force Him into a square:

Eternall God, (for whom who ever dare
Seek new expressions, doe the Circle square,
And thrust into strait corners of poore wit
Thee, who are cornerless and infinite.)
(Nicolson, p.62)

Kitty Scoular points out that according to Puttenham (*The Arte of English Poesie,* 11.xii, "Of the square") the circle stands for eternity and the square for a "constant minded man". She goes on: "It is only the man who lives a holy life who may resolve the ancient paradox, by combining temporal with eternal goodness, and by making any sort of architecture fit through his

excellence of character. Square contains circle when an earthly house contains an eternal being" (p.180). Thus in stanza seven the square house does become spherical as it swells with delight as Fairfax enters. Such a compliment is, however, not really to Fairfax's liking and the house would do better to retain its straightness of shape since this, in keeping with his humility, is what he finds pleasurable. Stanza eight continues the analogy by returning to the earlier imagery of lines ascending and descending:

> So Honour better Lowness bears,
> Then That unwonted Greatness wears.
> Height with a certain Grace does bend,
> But low Things clownishly ascend.
> (57-60)

The spatially chiastic images of the couplet "Height with a certain Grace does bend, / But low Things clownishly ascend" indicate the gracefulness of the downward curve of humility which Fairfax embodies, while simultaneously pointing out the inelegant upward movement of those undeserving proud who seek to rise beyond their level. This contrast of the upward and downward curve and the use of shape, symmetry and proportion to draw a moral lesson and compliment the Lord Fairfax, is also the basis for *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow.*

In August 1648 Milton celebrated Fairfax's military prowess in a sonnet which begins:

> Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings

Filling each mouth with envy, or with praise,
And all her jealous monarch with amaze,
And rumours loud, that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home...

Only two years later, after his resignation as leader of the Parliamentary Army on 25 July 1650, Lady Hutchinson wrote: "[it] could not have bene done more spitefully and ruinously to the whole parliamentary interest" and "this greate man was then as unmoovable by his friends as pertinacious in obeying his wife, whereby he then died to all his former glory" (Wilson, pp. 158-159). Far from agreeing that Fairfax's resignation caused him to die to all his former glory, Marvell offers the hill at Bill-borow as an emblem for the moral virtues of his patron whose choice of a retired life is celebrated.

Bill-borow Hill, to the north and west of Nunappleton, rises 145 feet above sea-level and was one of Fairfax's favourite countryside retreats (Friedman, following Markham, p.200). In the tradition of Jonson's *To Penshurst*, Carew's *To Saxham*, Herrick's *A Country-Life* and *Upon Appleton House, Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow* is a country estate poem which discusses the typology of the landscape, offers a compliment and celebrates virtue and moral value. There is a witty neatness about the poem which stems as much from its proportioned structure as its argument. Four stanzas are devoted to the hill, four to the grove and two to the subject of both. Thus the harmonious balance which Marvell sees in the landscape is reflected in the structure of the poem, which itself in its limited scope is a model of humility and unpretentiousness. Friedman has suggested that had

Marvell so wished, he could have found a far more imposing feature with which to celebrate Fairfax: "to the south Hambleton Hough and Brayton Barf both stand much higher than Bil-borough: and in the distance to the west, the hills of Yorkshire present a formidable, almost mountainous appearance" (p.200). Marvell, however, has chosen a hill of limited height and has similarly expressed his thoughts on it in a short poem, the simplicity of which is both pleasing and appropriate.

The poem begins with the familiar imperative command to see, and as in the opening stanzas of *Upon Appleton House* the reader is compelled to consider the visual and by means of its example to move to the invisible. The movement is that from sight to insight, from the hill's perfect shape to the moral virtue of its owner. Perfection is expressed in terms of curved lines. The earth is "arched" (1) into the hill and rises in "a perfect Hemisphere" (2). The word "bow" (6), with its connotations of both curved shape and humility, like the words "stoop" (29) and "bend" (59) in *Upon Appleton House*, suggests the graceful downward movement of those like Fairfax who are at once great and humble. This shape also has the added distinction of being natural (as Marvell pretends) and neither the mathematician's compass nor the artist's pencil or brush could achieve such perfection of shape as that designed by the hand of God. Man, with the aid of either the "stiffest" (3) or the "softest" (5) instruments would find his skill insufficient. Indeed, as Marvell hyperbolically claims, this hill seems to be the architectural model used in the creation of the earth: "It seems as for a Model laid, / And that the World by it was made" (7-8). This image, which reverses the usual pattern of the microcosm as a reflection of the

macrocosm, is necessary to establish the hill's perfection. As Friedman points out, "if the hill is to be taken as the natural scene and counterpart to [Fairfax's] retreat to the country, then it too, must be shown to be perfect in its own fashion" (p.201). Thus Marvell claims that the hemispherical perfection of Bill-borow hill served as a blueprint for the earth's construction.

In the second stanza Marvell defines by contrast. Bill-borow's perfect hemisphere is offered as an example of moderation from which the "unjust" mountains should learn the lesson of humility:

> Here learn ye Mountains more unjust,
> Which to abrupter greatness thrust,
> That do with your hook-shoulder'd height
> The Earth deform and Heaven fright,
> For whose excrescence ill design'd,
> Nature must a new Center find,
> Learn here those humble steps to tread,
> Which to securer Glory lead.
> (9-16)

The "curved" images of the first stanza are here distorted by the upward thrusting mountains which deform the earth and frighten heaven. The mountains are described in terms which simultaneously convey mathematical and moral connotations. Not only are they visually proportionless, they are also symbolic of overwhelming ambition which thrusts to "abrupter greatness". No divine hand was responsible for their "ill-designed" growth or "hook-shoulder'd height" as they wrench the perfect hemisphere out of

shape. Indeed, to such an extent do they distort the symbol of perfection that Nature is forced to find a new centre. Friedman (p.240) indicates that it is clear from *A Dialogue Between The Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure* that the earth's centre was the material symbol for the stability of the universe itself: "Try what depth the Centre draws; / And then to Heaven climb" (71-72). Similarly in *Upon Appleton House*, the "lesser World" (765) is described as "Heaven's Center" (767). To return to *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow,* the proportionless instability of the mountains contrasts strongly with the concept of the hill as a "model" for the world and so the mountains give both mathematical and artistic offence. Bill-borow hill, therefore, is able to instruct both by its harmonious mathematical and artistic proportions and by its symbolic representation of humility. It is the ideal place to learn how to tread the "humble steps" which lead to "securer Glory". Such glory, as opposed to "abrupter greatness", is more secure as it offers a greater stability, not only to the world itself, but also to the individual. To thrust upwards is to "deform" the earth, to ascend courteously and harmoniously is to offer a blueprint for the world.

The hill is depicted as a model of courtesy and accessibility. Unlike the mountains it does not tax or deter weary climbers, or injure their feet with sharp rocks. Instead, as the poet pretends, the hill offers a "soft" grass-covered access, easy on both feet and lungs. It does not thrust upwards, but ascends courteously, bending earthwards as it rises. Marvell here returns to the "curved" imagery of the opening stanza and the modesty of the hill is suggested in both its gradual ascent and the manner in which it bends, like the arc of a semi-circle, downwards as it rises:

See then how courteous it ascends,
And all the way it rises bends;
Nor for it self the height does gain,
But only strives to raise the Plain.
(21-24)

Its upward movement is thus part of its modesty, especially as it rises not for its own sake, but in order to "raise the Plain". The chiastic parallelism of the lines "See then how courteous it ascends, / And all the way it rises bends" (21-22) - they parallel the words "courteous" and "bends" and the words "ascends" and "rises" - reinforces this. This animated landscape deftly parallels Fairfax's own case. By implication modest men like Fairfax do not seek greatness out of self-interest, but only to raise those subordinate to them.

We now view the hill from afar. Despite its modest eminence, the hill still commands the field. At this point the language is deliberately ambiguous and the tenor and vehicle of the comparison merge as the hill is described in terms of a general surveying a field of battle while the retired general is described in terms of the hill which commands a clear view of the surrounding landscape. The hill's greatness is "unenvy'd" (26), and despite its modest size it commands a clearer view than the massive "*Teneriff*" which rises 12,000 feet higher. Unlike this mountain neither the hill nor Fairfax "dare" Heaven. The word "discerning" (27) with its connotations of discrimination and insight is surely no accident, conveying as it does the sense that true vision is related to modesty and humility rather than ambition and scale. We now follow the gaze of "weary Seamen" (29) who, when the

top-mast lookout sights Bill-borow hill, know that they have almost reached home. The hill is thus as constant by day as the Northern Star by which they steer during the hours of darkness.

From the distant perspective of the sailors we now move to a close-up view of the grove of trees which stands on Bill-borow's crest. The grove is celebrated as a place of retirement, at once a miniature Eden and a classical sacred grove with Fairfax as its presiding deity and protector. The shift to the past tense marks the end of the poem's focus as entirely devoted to the landscape. We now discern further in time as well as space and are offered historical and biographical information about the grove's protector. [1]

The sanctity of the "sacred Shade" is protected from the threat of the axe by the awe which Fairfax inspires. Despite his retirement from the active world, memories of his martial greatness remain and the sound of his rattling armour still echoes through the grove. The grove is also protected by the influence of Fairfax's wife, Anne Vere, who is presented as the dryad of the place. The stanza is not only an elaborate compliment to Anne, but also serves to extend our understanding of Fairfax himself. We still recall the echo of his rattling armour as we see him behave like a traditional pastoral lover and thus the contrast between, and the marriage of, the active and retired spheres is made more apparent. The grove is seen as a symbolic garden of Fairfax's love: a place so private that Fairfax's carving of his wife's name on the trees is unnecessary as they carry it in their hearts: "But

[1] I am indebted to Dr R Hall for this point.

ere he well the Barks could part / 'Twas writ already in their Heart" (47-48).

The personification of the trees is now made more explicit. As Marvell's witty parenthetic "('tis credible)" (49) makes clear, the trees are able to feel love and reverence. In their sap they contain the genius of the house and recognising their master's success grow as he advances. They are therefore the contemplative equivalent of worldly courtiers whose position is improved with their master's. Fairfax's moral uprightness is further celebrated by the observation that the trees have never grown "so streight and green" (56) under any other member of the house of Fairfax. It is of course impossible to forget that many of these Farfacian ancestors gained fame and renown in the active sphere, but it is the retired Lord Thomas who is responsible for the present abundance of the trees.

As stanza eight indicates, the trees have now finished growing. They are content, unlike the mountains, to be retired and rooted and are unwilling to elevate their "prudent Heads" (60) too far into the "winds uncertain gust" (59). Friedman hears in these lines "a mild note of regret for the greater field of command that Fairfax has left" (p.207), and indicates that Fairfax "salvaged his principles at the expense of his power to give them sway" (p.208). I prefer to hear a note of praise for a man who was prepared to sacrifice power for principles and this, surely, is Marvell's intention in this poem which in its entirety indicates the "securer Glory" of the retired life. Fairfax's former actions are not forgotten; indeed, when the breeze communicates with the trees, the latter in a modest whisper "name / Those

Acts that swell'd the Cheek of Fame" (64), but even this, as the final stanza makes clear, is too loud for Fairfax. Such metaphoric swelling, like that of Appleton House (the "swelling Hall", 51), is unpleasant to the humble Fairfax. Retirement must be balanced against former active greatness.

The trees' whisper is translated in stanza nine. Out of the life of contemplation, the symbolic courtiers speak of the life of military action and contrast their grove and hill with others that once formed the sphere of Fairfax's life. The harshness of the battlefield imagery is in stark contrast to all that precedes it, but indicates the success which Fairfax achieved in this brutal world. His former martial success is remembered, and the trees themselves lament the fact that their leaves and trunks are inadequate to honour his past exploits. Paradoxically on the very symbols of retirement (the trees) are hung the banners of the active sphere, the "*Garlands*" (69) and the "*Trophees*" (72). It is in the balance between Fairfax's military accomplishments and his retirement that Marvell's compliment lies. The juxtaposition of his former life against his present serves to increase the eminence of his retirement. In both the active and the contemplative spheres he achieves greatness; in all worlds he is in perfect balance.

The voice of the poet now re-enters the poem as Marvell both agrees with the trees and warns them to be quiet if they wish to retain Fairfax's favour and not offend his sense of modesty; advice that as author of the poem he does not heed himself. The type of courage embodied by Fairfax flies from its own praise. The classical flavour of the imagery is continued in the reference to "*Oracles* in Oak" (74) which calls to mind the famous

oracle of Zeus at Dodona where the will of the god was signified by the rustling of the wind in the oak trees (Margoliouth, p.278). The poet explains to the trees that Fairfax retreats into their shadow to shield his own brightness. The final couplet gathers up the ideas of the rest of the poem and presents the balance of height and retirement which is the Fairfacian ideal: "Nor he the Hills without the Groves, / Nor Height but with Retirement loves" (79-80). It is the combination of the hill's eminence and the grove's retirement which is prized by Fairfax. Together they suggest the proper balance between fame and modesty, greatness and quietness which is so apparent in Fairfax; and it is this balance which makes him truly great.

Geometric imagery, especially the imagery of lines, is also prevalent in *The Definition of Love* which offers an account of a love so perfect that it can never be closed in "union". Such a love, which cannot be consummated, is depicted by means of the spherical earth and by parallel lines which are themselves representative of balance.

This imagery is intellectual and diagrammatic rather than sensory despite the fact that the subject to be defined is love. The poem is, of course, reminiscent of Donne's *Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*, but Marvell's poem lacks the passion and immediacy found in the *Valediction* and is more like a clever theorem without a sense of an immediate occasion. Similarly, any emotion which is present seems to arise from intellectual pleasure rather than emotional and spiritual commitment. Despite the personal pronoun of the beginning, the individual relationship seems unimportant; it is the ingenuity and extravagance of the conceits, the

detached tone of ardent despair, which makes the poem both admirable and remarkable.

The speaker first offers a genealogy of his love. It is as rare as possible and no less is to be expected from the personified abstractions which gave it birth: despair and impossibility. These parents offer their offspring the greatest disadvantages possible in the realm of love. As Toliver suggests: "a disciplined and intense intellectual energy underlies the flat declaration of love's strangeness and elevation and the cryptic account of its begetting, which involves union in one sense but irrevocable disunion in another" (p.45). Out of one union, however, stems the very impossibility of consummation of another, and it is this paradox which dominates the rest of the poem.

Instead of bemoaning his fate as might be expected, the speaker moves to explore, in stanza 2, the paradoxical superiority of despair to hope:

> Magnanimous Despair alone
> Could show me so divine a thing,
> Where feeble Hope could ne'r have flown
> But vainly flapt its Tinsel Wing.
> (5-8)

His love is founded in despair and he rejoices in this fact as he spurns "feeble Hope" in favour of "Magnanimous Despair". This, as Friedman indicates, is most daring since the poet is elevating a cardinal sin at the expense of a cardinal virtue which is depicted as incapable of making the

flight necessary for the revelation of such a perfect love (p.180). Indeed, there is something pathetic about the vain flapping of Hope's "Tinsel Wing" as though a rather insubstantial butterfly nurtured the misguided and impossible desire to fly into the cosmic sphere, the domain of the speaker's love. The word "thing" echoes "object" of the previous stanza, but now the love is not only "strange and high", but also "divine".

In contrast with the vain flapping of Hope, the speaker can travel quickly until he arrives where his "extended Soul is fixt" (10). For all that he is intent on projecting his soul towards his mistress's, she is curiously ill-defined and, despite the repeated reference to "us" (there is no reference to "she" at all), never seems to be a real presence in the poem. The poet's detached emotions seem all directed to the logical proving of his theorem, a demonstration of the impossibility of consummation, using the formulae of Euclidean geometry. Fate, however, prevents the desired union of the "I" with its soul and lover by driving iron wedges between them. Again two senses are present: the wedges are driven both between the lovers and between the lover's body and his extended soul. Both of course result in disunion. In the previous stanza, Despair and Hope were in opposition; here Fate is opposed to passion and it is, paradoxically, her victory which will ensure the perfection of the love which she seeks to crowd "betwixt" (12). The iron wedges, therefore, are simultaneously ineffectual and effectual. They bring the lovers closer to perfection rather than depriving them of it, but they also ensure that the love will never be consummated.

Fate is personified as a female tyrant, the jealous arch-enemy of the lovers who would be deposed and ruined if the lovers closed in union. At this point we see the lovers from the perspective of fate's disembodied eye as she jealously guards her power:

> For Fate with jealous Eye does see
> Two perfect Loves; nor lets them close:
> Their union would her ruine be,
> And her Tyrannick pow'r depose.
> (13-16)

Marvell depicted Fate in a similar manner in *Daphnis and Chloe* ("Fate I come, as dark, as sad, / As thy Malice could desire"), but here the personification is more fully developed and Fate is presented as a powerful enemy of love. If she allowed lovers the ability to choose freely the partners of their own choice, then her power would be worthless. Strangely, the poem seems to rejoice in its own despair and the love is presented as one which can be celebrated in theory, though not enacted.

In the following stanza the personification of Fate is continued and she is presented as having quasi-political power and the ability to issue "Decrees" (17). But the decrees are "of Steel" and this echoes the iron wedges pushed between the lovers earlier. Indeed, the wedges have been so successfully used that the lovers have been forced on to different poles of the earth. The lovers thus form the axis on which the earth rotates and their relationship determines the wheeling of the world of love although they are unable to embrace one another. The monosyllables of the line "(Though

Loves whole World on us doth wheel)" (19) seem to form one long axis, an effect further emphasised by its enclosure in parenthesis. The line suggests not only that the world rotates on the axis of their love, but also that they are the standard by which all other loves are judged, and by implication found wanting. No other love is as perfect as theirs. Its perfection is represented by the circumference of the globe which separates them, a sphere which would have to be flattened into a two dimensional representation thereof if the lovers, isolated at the north and south poles, were to join. Thus in the very scope of the separation lies the symbolic representation of their ideal love.

In stanza six the poet moves from the language of astronomy to that of cartography in the image of the planisphere:

> Unless the giddy Heaven fall,
> And Earth some new Convulsion tear;
> And, us to joyn, the World should all
> Be cramp'd into a *Planisphere*.
> (21-24)

For the world of love to endure the lovers must keep apart. In effect, the stanza offers what Leishman terms "a catalogue of impossibilities" (p.70), since in suitably catastrophic terms the poet outlines the cost of union. The only possible way for them to meet would be for the whole earth to collapse into a planisphere, for the earth to go through the convulsions it endured in its formation and be flattened, for a solid to turn into a figure of plane geometry.

The poet now switches mathematical images to the simile of parallel lines and explores the paradox that for lines to be perfectly parallel they can never meet. It is only the flawed nature of oblique lines which allows them to merge and "in every Angle greet" (26). Parallel lines, though infinite, will always have the same exact distance between them, and to alter this would be to destroy the perfection on which their love is founded. This perfection is suggested as mirroring: the lines exactly mirror each other and would cease to be parallel if the reflection were in any way marred or distorted. Marvell is also surely taking into account the notion that a line infinitely extended will eventually form a circle and return to its point of origin (Friedman, p.182). Thus we also have the image of one circle within another, an echo of the spherical shape of the half circumference of the globe which separates the lovers. Perfection in love entails an acceptance of the impossibility of consummation.

The final stanza begins with the word "Therefore", which concludes the logical progression of the argument indicated by "And yet" (9), "For" (13), "And therefore" (17), and shows that this stanza offers a consequence or conclusion to all that precedes it:

> Therefore the Love which us doth bind,
> But Fate so enviously debarrs,
> Is the Conjunction of the Mind,
> And Opposition of the Stars.
> (29-32)

The opposition (reinforced by the alliteration) of love which "doth bind" and fate which "debarrs" is explained in common astronomical terms: conjunction and opposition. The "mind" is united, but because of the "opposition of the stars", a physical union is impossible. For such a union to take place, not only would the earth have to collapse from a solid to a planisphere, but also the order of the stars would have to alter. The balance which has been evident throughout the entire poem is brought to a climax in the last two lines. Consummation is forever prevented by the decrees of fate and for the poet this state represents the highest perfection in love that it is possible to achieve. Fate has only the power to control passions of the flesh and although the stars are irrevocably opposed to a physical celebration of their love, such opposition ensures its perfection.

Marvell has done what the title of his poem claimed: he has defined a type of love and in doing so has also described a world where frustration prevails, a world where consummation of a love affair is presented as impossible. It is the exact mirroring of the parallel lines, forever parted, which in this world is the ideal. The theorem has been proved and in keeping with the detached tone of the entire poem the final emotion, as Colie indicates, stems not from grief at the hopelessness of the situation, but rather from satisfaction at having solved the problem intellectually (1970, p.45). In fact, we return in our minds to the opening lines of the poem and agree that this love is truly "of a birth as rare / As 'tis for object strange and high".

In contrast to *The Definition of Love, Ametas and Thestylis making Hay-Ropes* describes a love which is consummated. Here the parallel lines are replaced by those which twist like the strands of hay used to make the hay-ropes. Initially this charming invitation to love, as Lejshman suggests, appears artless (p.119), but such a first impression is belied by the complexity of the trochaic heptasyllabic stanza and the carefully woven pattern of sounds which enact the twisting movement of the participants as they weave hayropes to secure the stooks. The poem is rhymed throughout on the word "hay" which ends each stanza, and this repeated sound suggests the coming together of the strands of hay which Ametas uses as the basis of his argument in favour of dalliance, while the interposed and varied "A" rhyme (on "stand", "twine" etc.) represents the mutual turning away which Thestylis initially uses to justify her unwillingness to love. The actions of the couple are exactly represented by the rhyme scheme of the poem which in turn recreates in motion their differing thought processes. Marvell uses only one image in this poem, that of binding hay as a metaphor for being bound by love, but this simultaneous use of thought and action (really a variation of his more familiar combination of the conceptual and the pictorial) allows us to perceive the divergent viewpoints of the participants as they both literally and metaphorically come together, part, and come together again.

Both partners argue from analogy. Ametas renews his request ("still" (2) suggests that he has previously attempted to persuade Thestylis) by comparing his love to a haycock: neither will stand unless appropriately bound. Thestylis' repeated refusals, therefore, will lead to the waning of his

love just as an untied haycock will disintegrate: "Love unpaid does soon disband: / Love binds Love as Hay binds Hay" (3-4). Only reciprocated love, love bound by love, will endure like a haycock bound by ropes of hay. Ametas, thus, insists that both partners in love must be of the same mind, just as both partners in twisting hayropes are involved in the same activity.

Thestylis, however, refuses to succumb to this reasoning and counters with an argument that despite its initial syntactical similarity diverges at every point. Her analogy moves from the literal to the figurative, from hay to love, and stresses dissimilarity rather than unity:

> Think'st Thou that this Rope would twine
> If we both should turn one way?
> Where both parties so combine,
> Neither Love will twist nor Hay.
> (5-8)

The hayrope would not be made if they were both to move in the same direction, thus if she agrees with Ametas that they must be the same in every respect then neither hayrope nor love affair will come into being. The strands of hay which form the hayrope, and by analogy the lovers, are twisted only because they are pulled in opposite directions. Thestylis is thus able to conclude that because parallel lines never meet, a mirror reflection of activities will result in separation whereas contrary actions will result in union.

Ametas chooses not to answer this, but rather dismisses it as "vain Excuses" (9) designed to delay a consummation which he sees as inevitable; her arguments "delay" (10), they do not prohibit. The pronouns are now plural, "thou" has become "you" and "us" replaces "me". Ametas speaks of women on behalf of all men and, in seeming contradiction to his earlier claim that "Love binds Love as Hay binds Hay" (4), makes a distinction between figurative and literal bonds or ropes: "And Love tyes a Womans Mind / Looser then with Ropes of Hay" (11-12). The abstraction has not the binding power of the actual and women's minds cannot be as neatly or securely bound by love as can the haycock by hayropes. A man cannot hope for constancy from a woman.

Thestylis, with a teasing coyness which was absent from her earlier speech, now offers an enigmatic invitation which really amounts to nothing more than a suggestion that Ametas take what he can get without worrying about constancy; and he, conveniently forgetting his claim that "Love unpaid does soon disband" (3), does just that. The argument is not so much resolved as forgotten, the hayrope is discarded and the lovers retire to a place within the haycock. The rope which was to be twisted and placed around the outside of the haycock is replaced by bodies twisting within it, a neat reversal echoed by the sharing of the final stanza and by the pun on the final "Hay" - which suggests not only the hay of the stooks, but also the circular dance of that name which involved the weaving of the dancers and ended with a kiss: "When at their Dances End they kiss/ Their new-made Hay not sweeter is" (*Upon Appleton House,* 431-2).

In *Ametas and Thestylis* the metaphor is conveyed by the imagery of twisting; in *The Fair Singer* Marvell turns to weaving. The poem reminds one of a delicate tapestry: on the warp of the military imagery is woven the woof of the imagery of love, eyes, ears, enchantment, until the work is complete and one both admires the skill which has gone into its construction and is charmed by the sensual beauty of the picture displayed.

In this elegant compliment Marvell also displays his ability to create a poem which though rooted in the traditions and language of the past seems to transcend previous boundaries and emerge as more polished, more extravagant and more detached than anything of the kind before. The polish and wit of the poem are astonishing, not only for the skilful manner in which Marvell resolves the discrepancy between the tenor (love) and vehicle (war), but also, as Friedman indicates, for the way in which he uses the vocabulary of music, normally associated with harmony and the bringing of chaos into order, to describe cruelty and destruction (p.44). The game of love is a "conquest" (1), the "Enemy" composed by "Love" is "sweet" (2), the dual "Beauties" of face and voice agree to the speaker's "death" (3), and "Harmony" is "fatal" (4). In the sustained war of love in which the speaker is engaged, the lady is armed with both visual beauty and aural harmony, as the title suggests, double weapons against which he is powerless. Legouis (p.28) questions Marvell's choice of the decasyllabic line for both this poem and *Musicks Empire*, calling it the least lyrical of metres to praise the art with which lyrical poetry is etymologically and traditionally associated. This metre, however, seems to be perfectly suited to the poem. The line is long enough to allow for the complex mesh of imagery being woven in the

quatrain and confirmed in the epigrammatic rhyming couplet, while the closeness of the pentameter to non-lyrical speech patterns allows the speaker to remain detached and aloof even though he is simultaneously describing his enchantment and captivity.

The lady's attack is launched on two fronts: her eyes, in traditional mould, "bind" (5) the speaker's heart while, with typical Marvellian innovation, her voice captivates his mind. The idea that music has specific power over the mind of the listener is similarly expressed in *A Dialogue Between The Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure*, although the Soul in that poem is able to withstand the temptation: "None can chain a mind / Whom this sweet Chordage cannot bind" (43-44). The speaker in *The Fair Singer*, though, is enticed by both sound and beauty and the doubleness of the attack is emphasised by the balance of the couplet: "That while she with her Eyes my Heart does bind, / She with her Voice might captivate my Mind" (5-6); one line of this is devoted to the power of the eyes and one to the power of the voice. Complete repetition which would be tiresome is avoided by the device of varying the word order. The object verb pattern of line 5, "my Heart does bind", is reversed in line 6, "might captivate my Mind". The balance is further stressed by the puns on "bind", to tie up and to charm as with a magic spell, and on "captivate", to capture and to enchant. It is such combination of the sensual and intellectual which makes this poem so remarkable and endows conventional tributes with the power to surprise.

The duality of the lady's charms is reiterated in stanza two. It is the combination of eyes and voice which is irresistible; an attack by "One but

singly fair" (7) could be withstood. Such an assault would temporarily succeed in ensnaring only the speaker's soul, not his heart and mind which are the fair singer's more permanent victims. Paradoxically, the net woven from the woman's hair can be broken, while the fetters made of air are inescapable. The lady's locks curl around the speaker like tentacles and the notes of the song encircle him, wreathing not a delicate floral tribute as one would expect, but fetters which make flight impossible. Violence and delicacy, sensuality and intellectual paradox all combine as the curved images restrain the speaker in "Fetters of the very Air" (12) he breathes. The fetters seem also to be both within and without him, clasping his ankles but also inside him as he inhales the very substance of his imprisonment. Marvell's constructions of air (one recalls the "Mosaique of the air" in *Musicks Empire*) are both beautiful and surprisingly solid, and it is a tribute to his skill that we fully accept fetters of air or tears or flowers as having the power to bind. Similarly, the first person singular, apparent throughout, but most noticeable here, adds substantiality to the fetters, leading us to accept that this is a personal experience, an event so surprising that it must be communicated and commemorated. Moreover, the use of metaphor (saying what it does to one, rather than simile, saying what it reminds one of) increases the intensity of the experience (Leishman, p.52) - an intensity which the lack of visual description of the singer does nothing to dispel.

The military imagery underlying stanzas one and two rises in the third stanza to the surface, where singer and listener are depicted as opposing generals. Again the duality of matched enemies where the outcome hangs in the balance, as when Zeus held the scales containing the

fates of Hector and Achilles, would be easy; but to resist an enemy who has the advantage of wind and sun is both in "vain" (15) and misguided vanity. In the final four lines of the poem all the strands of imagery are united with an astounding economy and precision:

> But all resistance against her is vain,
> Who has th' advantage both of Eyes and Voice,
> And all my Forces needs must be undone,
> She having gained both the Wind and Sun.
> (15-18)

The lines divide into two perfectly balanced pairs which repeat the same conclusion that defeat for the speaker is inevitable, but do so in such a way as to emphasise the "fatal Harmony" of the combination of visual and aural beauty. Each thought of the first pair (15-16) is echoed in the second (17-18) which restates the conclusion in military terms, but repetitive monotony is avoided by the chiastic device of transposing "Eyes and Voice" into "Wind and Sun" in the final line. The speaker is utterly defeated, he cannot withstand the combination of voice (air, breath, music, and wind) and beauty (eyes, light and sun), nor do we expect him to.

In this poem Marvell has woven a verbal tapestry of varied images. Just like the singer he has used his "subtile Art" to "wreathe" a poem which enchants and captivates. His wreathing, though, is not invisible, it is conveyed, in this poem and others, by means of lines, angles and curves. Lines and shapes either convey a moral significance or enable us to visualise the invisible: the binding power of music or the perfection of a love which

can never be consummated. However beautifully and skilfully used, though, it is not imagery of the line that dominates Marvell's lyrics. That honour is reserved for the circle, the most perfect of geometric shapes. Marjorie Hope Nicolson pays tribute to Marvell's use of the circle in her book *The Breaking of the Circle*: "No poet of the Seventeenth century, I think, used the circle more charmingly than did Andrew Marvell" (p.57); and it is to this image that I will now turn.

CHAPTER TWO

SYMMETRY AND CIRCULARITY

The circle with its purity of shape, its simplicity and the symbolism that can be attached to it appears again and again in the lyrics to express divinely inspired harmony, ethical and moral proportion and, as MacCaffrey notes, as a correlative of certain positive values (p.267). The same critic suggests that "circularity is related to spontaneity and naturalness, drawing on the ancient belief that circular motion is alone perfect and perpetual" (p.267). Rostvig elaborates further: "The circular shape...was taken to reflect the nature of the Deity, both being without beginning or end, and the movement of the spheres was attributed to love. All created things, and particularly the angelic spirits, circle around God, as Herrick explains in the epigram defining Paradise ("Paradise is (as from the Learn'd I gather) / A quire of blest Soules circling in the Father")" (Ricks, p.218).

In *The Coronet* the poet's desire to praise God selflessly is depicted visually by his moving away from the complications of twisted and convoluted expression to the simplicity of the circle. Only once true

contrition within the compass of the poem's own thought has been achieved, does it begin to take on the perfection of shape represented by heaven's diadem, the perfect circle which surrounds Christ's brow.

The poet begins by weaving his poetic tribute to expiate his past sins and remove the briars he has personally contributed to Christ's crown of thorns. The syntax of the first eight lines enacts the speaker's desire to weave a new coronet for Christ. Sounds and words are repeated and echoed as the poet reviews his past faults. In the first line the word "long" immediately creates confusion as the reader initially is uncertain whether the word indicates a desire or a measure of time. Only after the poet repeats the word is it possible to understand that he is referring to the length of time he has been wounding his Lord by sinning. After recognising the faults of this past behaviour he seeks to "redress that Wrong" (4) by replacing the thorns with flowers. The word "redress" is also problematic. The speaker obviously seeks to rectify his culpable behaviour and make amends for past sins, but the word also connotes the sense of readjusting, or raising again to an erect position. At this stage of the temporal sequence the speaker is only aware of the problem of his past sins, he has not yet recognised that he cannot atone for his sins by a simple realignment of his position. To find grace his contrition must be complete: a mere reweaving of the old crown with garlands in place of thorns is not enough. Neither is it sufficient to use secondhand flowers from his beloved's discarded headdress as a tribute for Christ. As Cullen indicates, "the mere Christianisation of poetry is not enough" (p.179). The rejection of pastoral poetry in favour of religious verse is only an outward show of contrition, not a sincere rejection of inner

sin. That the speaker has not yet realised the nature of his own sin is made clear by the self-deceiving humility of "(my fruits are only flow'rs)" (6), claiming that his flowers have not yet developed into fruits. The speaker seeks praise for his own sacrifice, and the apparently self-deprecatory tone is belied by the fact that at this stage of the poem he deems himself capable of undoing Christ's crown of thorns without divine assistance.

So far the poet has realised that he is a sinner, that his behaviour must change and that he desires to use his poetic talents, his flowers, to write a poem in praise of Christ. He has dismantled his shepherdess's headdress, has gathered flowers and has a supply of raw materials for his new construction. Line 9 marks the beginning of self-knowledge in the speaker and a move to a present ("And now") awareness of his motive for wanting to weave a coronet for Christ. Only when he moves away from an outward display of his own skill to an inner understanding of motive does self-knowledge result. His motivation is pride. Rather than offering praise to Christ he wishes to appropriate that praise for himself and to seek admiration for his own skill and talent in weaving a chaplet for Christ superior to any that He has yet worn. The speaker's admission of his self-deception ("(so I my self deceive)") is accompanied by a sincere expression of humility and regret ("Alas I find") and the recognition that his own pride, his desire for "Fame and Interest", has allowed "the Serpent old" to become intertwined in his garland. The syntax enacts the "twining in" (14) of the snake and emphasises that garland and camouflaged serpent are inextricably woven together. Placing "That" at the beginning of line 14 instead of before

"the Serpent old" and putting "does fold" at the end of line 15 instead of at the beginning creates this weaving effect.

The move away from introspection in line 17 (after appearing six times in the first 16 lines the pronoun "I" does not appear at all in the rest of the poem) to an awareness that his problem of how to praise Christ is shared by the whole of humanity ("Ah, foolish Man"), marks the beginning of true contrition on the part of the speaker. Man is indeed foolish to think that his mortal efforts motivated by the desire for renown can add to or replace "Heavens Diadem". In comparison to this supreme crown of glory the shepherdess's tower and the rich chaplet are mere tawdry decorations. Similarly, it is only when the speaker has realised that Christ's crown of thorns has already been replaced by a heavenly diadem, that he can accept his own mortal limitations and turn to the only being who can separate snake and flowers:

> But thou who only could'st the Serpent tame,
> Either his slipp'ry knots at once untie,
> And disintangle all his winding Snare:
> Or shatter too with him my curious frame:
> And let these wither, so that he may die,
> Though set with Skill and chosen out with Care.
> (19-24)

Redemption must be divinely inspired and guided; flawed and mortal man can achieve nothing on his own. Acceptance of this is the penultimate step of the journey to self-knowledge. The speaker takes the last step when he

humbles himself completely before Christ and accepts that though only Christ can disentangle snake and garland He may choose instead to destroy the "curious frame". These concluding ten lines of the poem form a prayer to Christ so that temporally the poem has moved from past (1-8) to present (9-16), to an anticipation of the future. Christ has the choice "either" to remove the serpent, "or" to shatter the frame. He may elect to allow the flowers, "these", to wither so that the serpent, "he", may die. Although the poet has used all his earthly knowledge, skill and care to weave the coronet, his construction is still flawed and can offer no further glory to Him who wears heaven's diadem.

In the woven and twisted metaphor of the poem the "curious frame" is both garland, poem and also, by implication, the poet's body which it may be necessary to shatter to destroy the serpent of pride. All three must be submitted to Christ to use as He pleases. This is true humility, as is the recognition that the crown he once thought would be far richer than anything yet worn by Christ, is fit only to crown His feet: "That they, while Thou on both their Spoils dost tread, / May crown thy Feet, that could not crown thy Head" (25-26). Christ may tread on both serpent and flowers and the ruined garland of interwoven snake and flowers will then be tribute enough for Him. In one sense the poem is open-ended. We are not told what Christ's choice will be; it is the poet's willingness to have his creation, and perhaps himself, destroyed, not the outcome, which is important. The poet's humility and submission to God are symbolised by the fact that the final line of the poem echoes the opening lines. In effect the poem forms a circle, the end returning to the beginning, and this circular shape suggests the beauty

and purity of the relationship of God and his creation when that relationship is held in proper balance and proportion. The poet's exchange of pride for humility allows the shape of the poem to echo the perfect circle of heaven's diadem in a way that the vainglorious rich chaplet, circular though it is, could never do.

As the move to contrition and repentance is made, the metrical arrangement of the poem modulates into a more balanced pattern. The interwoven three-, four- and five-stressed lines of the first sixteen lines are replaced by perfectly regular iambic pentameter (with the exception of the opening trochee of line 20). Furthermore, this section (17-26) begins and ends with couplets which enclose six lines rhyming ABCABC. This more regular syntactic, rhyming and metrical pattern signifies the simplicity of the solution to what initially seemed to be an insurmountable problem. Christ does not need more crowns or tributes, heaven already has a diadem, but it is possible to praise Him with creative gifts if such gifts are offered humbly and without desire for personal glory. It is as much as fallen man can do to crown Christ's feet; to desire more is vanity.

Circular shape is God-inspired and when seen in nature is evidence of His own perfection and benevolence to His creation. In *Bermudas* the Edenic qualities of the island are emphasised by their circularity. The riches which God provides for his pilgrims reflect His own being in their abundance and shape. The psalmic cadences of this poem are in perfect keeping with its celebratory tone of praise for the creator of the island which is both a new Eden and a refuge from the imperfect world. Similarly, the

almost perfectly regular tetrameter movement of the verse, the regular and perfect rhyme and the poem's symmetry, stress the harmonious motion of the rowing-inspired song and the island's prelapsarian qualities. In the same way that the island is an enclosed unit set apart from the rest of the world, a frame is provided for the pilgrims' song (5-36) by the first four and last four lines of the poem. This frame not only encloses the song, but also gives to the poem a circular structure as it ends where it began with a description of the pilgrims' rowing boat. The circularity re-emphasises the order of this island paradise, an effect which is further highlighted by the quiet note of personification of the first four lines. This personification, combined with the adjectives and participles, prepares us for the description of the idyllic world which follows. Bermuda is an island both receptive and protected, prepared by God as a haven against persecution. The maternal image of the remote island secure in the "Oceans bosome" (2) suggests God's providential care for His people who after suffering for Him are led through chaos ("the watry Maze") to a world of order and beauty.

The perspectival details of the poem are fascinating. The outer frame (1-4 & 37-40) describes the sea and acts as a circumference of a circle enclosing the entire poem. From this circumference we move inwards along radii from the beginning and end of the poem until we reach the centre of the circle, the centre of the poem and by implication, the centre of the island. Each four-line unit marks not only a step nearer to the centre, but also a shift in perspective so that we move from a panoramic view of the sea and island, hear the pilgrims' praises, see the shoreline, then the landscape and finally are given a close-up view of the fruit which dominates the centre.

At the centre, God's intimate and providential care is stressed - "He makes the Figs our mouths to meet" (21) - and we then move outwards again via descriptions of fruit, landscape, shoreline and sung praises until we reach the circumference of the circle and the frame. This symmetry and regularity evokes the imagined rhythm of song and oars and the paradisal theme of Bermuda as a new Eden. In this ordering of the poem, the appeal is largely intellectual, but the imagery is overwhelmingly sensory.

At the centre, the close-up perspective of the Eden-like fruit (17-24) suggests the mouth-watering abundance of the isle. The lamp-like oranges, harmoniously spherical in shape, suggest richness and the easy connection between the world of nature and the world of human invention ("Lamps"). Pomegranates are sources of jewelled richness, figs and melons are animated by God's direction and the apples are beyond compare. The night illuminated by the golden oranges is "green" (18) as though the very atmosphere is alive with divine fruitfulness and vibrancy. The whole passage conveys the intimacy of the pilgrims' relationship with God whose benevolence is such that tastes and appetites are gratified almost before a desire is perceived.

The quatrains (13-16 & 25-28) which surround the fruit passage again stress God's largesse. At His direction the eternal Spring paints all elements of the landscape in colours far brighter than those of the imperfect world. His own choice of cedars grows abundantly. He has arranged for birds to visit daily and for whales to provide sweet-scented ambergris to perfume the shore. Both the eye and the nose are satisfied by this abundance

of colour and aroma. On moving further outwards to the shoreline (9-12 & 29-32) we find that emphasis is placed on what God sends to the beach. Useful sea-monsters and the gospel's pearl are beached. Most importantly, he lands the pilgrims on the island and gives them the freedom to worship Him in a rocky temple provided for the purpose. Mention of storms and the prelate's rage are a reminder of the imperfections of the outside world, but the pilgrims are protected from such threats by God. No wonder that Marvell describes this world as "far kinder than our own" in the quatrains which describe the pilgrims' desire to sing His praises (5-8 & 33-36). The grammatical subject in these lines, "we" or "our voice", differs from the rest of the song where it is "He". As the beneficiaries of God's abundant gifts the pilgrims can do no other than sing His praises so energetically that their musical tribute ascends to heaven and from there rebounds and echoes beyond the Mexique Bay to spread the word of His bounty. These lines create the image of moving over the sea, the first four taking us into the island and the last four out again, and their main subject is the celebration of the freedom which the pilgrims have found to praise God. The actual song enclosed within these lines is dominated by the description of God's providential action, the reason for the praise.

The last four lines of the poem correspond to the first four and frame the song itself. We are distanced from the island both physically (in that we now see the boat from a bird's-eye perspective) and mentally (as the first-person pronouns of the song modulate into the "they" used by the anonymous listener who hears the song offered to the "listning Winds"). The poem ends with the information that the pilgrims are only rowing to

keep time for their song, and we zoom away to our less kind world where neither rowing nor singing can possibly be performed so harmoniously.

In *Upon Appleton House* the circular motif and structure emphasise the harmony of a world guided by the morality and restraint of the Lord Fairfax. Proportion, as we have seen, is the ruling principle of the estate where the "more decent *Order*" of this "lesser *World*" is contrasted with the "rude heap" of the world beyond. Circular or hemispherical shapes appear throughout the poem: the tortoise's carapace (13), the arching boughs of the trees in the woods (509), the shape of the hemisphere (775) and the inverted boats of the salmon fishers (772). Fairy circles are mentioned (430), as is the orbit of stars around the poles (314), and the estate is praised as "*Heaven's Centre*" (767). The cyclical patterns of the poem also take on a circular shape. "Things greater" are indeed in "less contain'd" (44) as the scope of the poem includes historical cycles of the Fairfax family and of England itself. Biblical and classical allusions create the sense of the vast cycles of historical time while within this framework the poem itself suggests the movement from season to season and from sunrise to sunset. This cyclical movement is also echoed by the manner in which the end of the poem returns to the beginning. The poem opens with the house and its history and, after a tour of the estate, ends with an invitation to re-enter it: "Let's in" (775). The poem, like the estate, is designed according to the dictates of "*holy Mathematicks*". The circular shape which dominates the poem's form is the ideal vehicle to give visual expression to the virtues of the Lord Fairfax which are the guiding principles behind the estate's design.

CHAPTER THREE

LIQUID SPHERES

As we have seen, in several poems Marvell uses circular shapes and motifs to depict moral and geometric harmony and proportion. In other lyrics it is the liquid sphere which is used to convey such qualities. This is most apparent in *On a Drop of Dew* which Nicolson terms "the loveliest circle-poem of the seventeenth century" (p.59).

The circular shape of the drop of dew suggests the perfection of the heavenly realm which gave it birth and with which it longs for reunion. The imperative to "see" with which the poem begins immediately demands that the faculty of sight be used to perceive the visible as an emblem of the invisible. In addition, we are directed to see "how" the drop behaves: both appearance and behaviour are important:

> See how the Orient Dew,
> Shed from the Bosom of the Morn
> Into the blowing Roses
> (1-3)

The lines which follow the hortatory opening are essentially descriptive, but Marvell is actually presenting an ingenious analogy, totally symmetrical and ostensibly detached. The word "Orient" not only suggests the exotic East and the pearls found there and thus immediately indicates both the shape of the dew drop and its lustre, but also shows that it is a product of the morning, born of sunrise. Something as transient and insubstantial as a drop of dew is given translucent pearl-like qualities of permanence and value which contrast with the mutable existence of the "blowing Roses" whose petals will fade and fall. The line "Round in its self incloses" (6) suggests that the dew drop seeks to limit its contact with the rose and indicates the contempt which it feels for its "Mansion new" by withdrawing into itself:

> Yet careless of its Mansion new;
> For the clear Region where 'twas born
> Round in its self incloses:
> And in its little Globes Extent,
> Frames as it can its native Element.
> (4-8)

As Friedman suggests, the syntax of the line itself enacts the movements ascribed to the drop: "we expect that the verb 'incloses' will govern a direct object, instead of which we come to realise that the verb turns back upon itself as we discover that what has been enclosed has already been specified, and is the encloser itself" (Patrides, p.314). The line can also take "the clear Region where 'twas born" as its object and this indicates that the dew drop seeks to enclose in itself the pure essence of its home and to create on earth a miniature version of the realm from which it comes. That we are

meant to perceive a world in miniature is clear from Marvell's use of the word "Globes" which has connotations both of the size and shape of the drop, and also of the sense of its setting up its own world separate from the one in which it finds itself. This is echoed by the word "Frames" which suggests that the drop wishes to create a boundary or border within which its "native Element" can be held inviolate. The drop "Frames" and "incloses" its native element by a mirror reflection, attracting to itself the light of heaven, holding this light within its frame and radiating it back to the heavenly realm: "But gazing back upon the Skies / Shines with a mournful Light" (11-12).

The second sentence of the poem begins with a repetition of the word "How" (9) and reaffirms the importance of the drop's actions. The effort needed to maintain purity is conveyed both in terms of reflection and re-reflection of heavenly light and by the straining capillarity of the drop. Earthly beauty holds no appeal and the dew drop slights the rose in its attempts to allow as little as possible of its surface to come into contact with the rose petals. In doing so it aspires upwards, both in its shape and in the direction of its gaze. The word "purple" (9) carries with it echoes of richness and indicates the sensuousness of the rejected blossom. The drop, in contrast to the dark coloured rose which absorbs light, radiates the "mournful Light" of its longing back to the sky and paradoxically becomes its own tear. The drop has existence in its own right as a dew drop, but also seems to exist as a tear formed out of its entire being because it is separated from "the Sphear" (14).

The drop is restless because of its fear of becoming tainted by contact with the earth and longs only for the Sun to take pity on it and, by evaporation, return it to itself. Marvell writes that the sun will "exhale it back again" (18) as though to suggest that the sun will inhale it to itself, completing a circular and natural journey from the "Bosom of the Morn" to the "Mansion new" and back to "the Skies".

With the word "So" (19) the poet begins drawing an analogy between the drop and the human soul. The fearful trembling capillarity of the drop as it seeks to maintain the maximum of surface tension on the rose is repeated by the twisting action of the soul which also shuns the earthly flower: "Remembering still its former height, / Shuns the sweat leaves and blossoms green" (22-23). The soul's thoughts are pure, concerned with memories of its "former height". This act of memory is superbly suggested by the adjective "circling" which conveys the soul's self-containedness and its rejection of all earthly contamination and by the dual meaning of "recollecting", to remember and to re-gather:

> And, recollecting its own Light,
> Does, in its pure and circling thoughts, express
> The greater Heaven in an Heaven less.
> (24-26)

By mimicking the perfect circle of heaven, remembering its heavenly paradise and gathering to itself the light of heaven, the soul truly can represent the "greater Heaven" in its lesser self.

The image of purity as akin to a circle is continued in the lines which follow where we perceive the soul striving to minimise its contact both with the world around it and the round world so that all aspects of the earthly sphere are excluded:

> In how coy a Figure wound,
> Every way it turns away:
> So the World excluding round,
> Yet receiving in the Day.
> (27-30)

As Friedman points out, "to turn away every way is to turn in no specific direction, but at the same time to describe all the arcs of a circle, and thus to mime perfection" (Patrides, p.318). Just as the drop drew the light of heaven to itself, so too does the soul receive the pure light of day. The rhyming couplet "Dark beneath, / but bright above: / Here disdaining, / there in Love" with its balanced metrical syllables (3,4 and 4,3) reinforcing the soul's disdain for the dark and love of the light is a perfect affirmation of the soul's desire for heavenly perfection and purity. Like the drop it also longs for reunion, it balances on a point, shunning contact with the fallen world and bends upwards (as noted in Chapter 1) in a perfect display of humility and inviolate purity: "It all about does upwards bend" (36).

Throughout the poem the form of the verse has echoed the content. At first the loose octo- and heptasyllabic lines have themselves trembled between formlessness and regular metre, becoming more and more regular as the argument progresses until the poem ends with an iambic pentameter

quatrain rhyming AABB (37-40) as though to represent stability after insecurity. In this quatrain Marvell concludes his argument by extending his analogy to include reference to God-given manna. Like the dew drop and the soul it too is created in the heavenly sphere; it is white - the colour of light - and perfect in that realm, but when tainted with even the slightest contact with the earth it becomes congealed. When dissolved or restored by the light of the sun, though, it returns triumphant to the glory of its maker, both sun and Son:

> Such did the Manna's sacred Dew destil;
> White, and intire, though congeal'd and chill.
> Congeal'd on Earth: but does, dissolving, run
> Into the Glories of th' Almighty Sun.
> (37-40)

A more common liquid sphere in Marvell's lyrics is that of the tear drop. Nicolson comments that "of all the minor circle-figures of the century, none was more persistent than the tears that flowed so easily and copiously from the eyes of seventeenth century lovers and their ladies" (p.52). Tears are mentioned frequently for a variety of reasons, and are ascribed very varied functions. The tears of the nuns in *Upon Appleton House* are allegedly an aid to a clear complexion: "And Holy-water of our Tears / Most strangly our Complexion clears" (111-112), while in *The unfortunate Lover*, the lover's bitter tears are loaned from the sea: "The Sea him lent these bitter Tears / Which at his Eyes he alwaies bears" (17-18). In *A Dialogue Between Thyrsis and Dorinda*, the shepherdess weeps because of

her longing for Elysium, while the mourners in *Upon the Death of Lord Hastings* are instructed to

> Go, intercept some Fountain in the Vein,
> Whose Virgin-Source yet never steept the Plain.
> *Hastings* is dead, and we must finde a Store
> Of Tears untoucht, and never wept before.
> Go, stand betwixt the *Morning* and the *Flowers*;
> And, ere they fall, arrest the early *Showers*.
> *Hastings* is dead; and we, disconsolate,
> With early *Tears* must mourn his early *Fate*.
> (1-8)

There is something deeply moving in the thought that the young Hastings, only 19 at his death, should be mourned with untouched virgin tears. Similarly, the instruction to gather tears from the morning dew before it lands on the waiting flowers conveys a deep felt sense of loss, especially when the elaborateness of the image is juxtaposed against the repeated unadorned statement: "*Hastings* is dead" (3 & 7).

These poems, though, do not explore the nature of tears themselves. This is done briefly in *The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun* and in much greater detail in two completely lachrymose poems, *Eyes and Tears* and *Mourning*.

Both fawn and Nymph weep in *The Nymph complaining*. When the fawn is dying the Nymph says:

See how it weeps. The Tears do come
Sad, slowly dropping like a Gumme.
So weeps the wounded Balsome: so
The holy Frankincense doth flow.
The brotherless *Heliades*
Melt in such Amber Tears as these.
(95-100)

In these lines Marvell weaves together a mesh of imagery of tears which, in conjunction with the quiet and slow pace of the passage, suggest the depth of the Nymph's grief. The fawn's tears drop like resin from a wounded balsam tree, slowly seeping down the bark. With his reference to frankincense and amber the poet reinforces his weeping tree image by recalling that both incense and amber are gums. Frankincense also gives a religious overtone to the lines as this incense was that most commonly used on altars, rising to heaven like a prayer. The couplet with which this passage ends (99-100) conveys the pathos of the Nymph's situation perfectly. Not only do we remember the grief of Phaethon's sisters on his death and their subsequent transformation into poplar trees which wept tears of amber, but also recall that amber once was liquid before being fossilised into tear shaped drops. Perhaps no image could be so movingly expressive of grief, weeping and pathos as this.

After the reference to amber, with its orange hue, we are prepared for the "golden Vial" which will house the fawn's tears:

I in a golden Vial will

Keep these two crystal Tears; and fill
It till it do o'reflow with mine;
Then place it in *Diana's* Shrine.
(101-104)

As Craze points out, the "golden Vial" is taken from Revelation V 8, where "the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (p.77). In the previous lines the poet evoked the image of incense spiralling to heaven like a prayer, and here the biblical allusion again stresses the sacred nature of the fawn's tears. This sacredness is reinforced by the fact that the fawn's tears are crystalline: clear, transparent and pure. Purity is also suggested in the reference to Diana, an emblem of chastity and virginity.

The final twelve lines of the poem describe the statue which will replace the Nymph after her death. Although the statue is to be sculpted from marble, a stone characterised by its hardness and durability, the Nymph so mourns her loss that her very statue itself will weep copiously, eroding its own form:

For I so truly thee bemoane,
That I shall weep though I be Stone:
Until my Tears, still dropping, wear
My breast, themselves engraving there.
(115-118)

In this poem, tears have been the symbol of overwhelming grief and of purity. In *Eyes and Tears* Marvell suggests that tears offer a more virtuous means of seeing than the organs of sight themselves.

Eyes and Tears is a highly wrought series of epigrammatic quatrains which explore the paradoxical assertion that sight, traditionally the noblest sense, is "Self-Deluding" (4). It is only by blurring the eyes with tears, thus preventing clear sight, that true insight can be achieved.

The lyric begins with the basic thought that according to the dictates of Nature we both see and express grief by means of the same organ:

> How wisely Nature did decree,
> With the same Eyes to weep and see!
> That, having view'd the object vain,
> They might be ready to complain.
> (1-4)

The pun on "vain", used both as an adjective and adverb, alerts us to the idea that to view the world is to respond by weeping and that the faculty of sight is an imperfect recorder of the outer world: both what we see and how we see it are "vain".

Having stated his basic premise, Marvell in stanza two uses the language of mathematical construction to reveal the superiority of tears to eyes. In measuring a false angle, the eyes are not only misled by what they see, but also by their own intrinsic inability to distinguish true proportion

and, by implication, true value: "And, since the Self-deluding Sight, / In a false Angle takes each hight" (5-6). Conversely, tears measure correctly, falling in straight plumb-like lines. As in *The Definition Of Love*, truth runs in straight lines while oblique lines suggest imperfection (Friedman in Patrides, p 323). This dichotomy is explored further in the rest of the poem.

In the third stanza the image of linear angles is discarded in favour of that of balances and weights. The eyes are now scales in which tears, resulting from sorrow at viewing the world, are first formed and then "paid out in equal Poise" (11). The tears offer the poet the "true price" of all his "Joyes" (12) because they are perfectly balanced, hanging from the eyes like equal weights. Stanza four continues the *contemptus mundi* theme. Everything perceived through the senses turns to tears even though it is ostensibly beautiful or evocative of laughter. Even the sight of precious jewels brings forth the most valuable gems of all: tears. It is the strangely liquid quality of gemstones suggested here which gives the image a sensuous beauty. Jewels seem insubstantial in comparison to tears, part of a world of fallen nature which deludes the visual sense. The word "Pendants" (16) bestows upon the tears a more jewel-like quality than the gemstones themselves. Liquidity is further suggested in the following stanza, not in opposition to hardness, but as a sign of sweetness and repose. The beauty of the garden also elicits a tearful response. The flowers in the gardens visited by the poet manufacture tears in place of nectar. So too, in stanza 6, the sun, in the role of an alchemist, extracts the quintessential essence of the earth with its hot rays, but in pity rains it back in tear-shaped drops.

Alchemists used the word "essence" for the fifth essence which they believed was capable of being distilled (Donno, p.236). The words of this stanza seem to turn the whole earth to liquid:

> So the all-seeing Sun each day
> Distills the World with Chymick Ray;
> But finds the Essence only Showers,
> Which straight in pity back he powers.
> (21-24)

The sun "Distills" the world, but finding the "Essence" to be only "Showers" returns it to the earth as rain. The aural pun on "powers" both suggests the power of the sun in returning the distilled essence and also suggests that the sun pours the liquid out on to the world.

In stanza seven Marvell pauses to identify the ideal state of being. They are happy who see less because they weep more: "Yet happy they whom Grief doth bless, / That weep the more, and see the less" (25-26). The best eyes are those blinded by tears. Only blurred and incomplete vision can offer true moral insight and, like the drop of dew, the eye can only retain its purity by cutting itself off from the world around it. Only when the eyes are full of the dew of their own making can they preserve their "Sight more true" (28). Marvell moves from the general to the particular in stanza eight and gives us the example of Mary Magdalen to prove the rule formulated in the previous stanza. Mary Magdalen drowns her seductive glances in penitential tears which each form a link in the chain which binds her to Christ's feet. Once her eyes cease to be "captivating"

(30), she truly captivates Christ and binds herself to him. The beauty of the final two lines of this stanza is remarkable: "Whose liquid Chaines could flowing meet / To fetter her Redeemers feet" (31-32). The lines manage to convince us that tears can be formed into the links of a chain and that Christ's feet can be fettered, not with iron, but with something as insubstantial as tears. The lines evoke a sense of true spiritual redemption far more movingly than do those of the Latin stanza (translated by Donno, p. 237) on the same subject:

> Thus, when Magdalen dismissed her wanton lovers
> And dissolved her sultry eyes into chaste waters,
> Christ stood fixed in a flowing bond of tears,
> His sacred feet held in a liquid chain.

The fruitfulness of tears is explored in stanza nine. In a series of convex shapes the poet hyperbolically suggests the positive nature of tears. Nothing is as fair as the beauty of eyes swollen with tears, not the sails of fully laden ships, nor the shape of a pregnant womb. Even the full moon - "*Cynthia* Teeming" (35) - cannot compare in beauty with the shape of eyes swollen with weeping. Tears are similarly positive in their ability to offer relief for all pains, particularly they protect the viewer from the impurity which abounds in the fallen world. In stanza ten, the sensuous eye communicating its lust loses its heat when drenched in tears as does the lightning when slaked by the thunderer's pity. Incense too, as stanza eleven makes clear, is dear to heaven not for the appeal of its aroma, but as a tear-shaped drop of resin. Marvell here underplays the traditional attribute of incense - the manner in which its perfume ascends to heaven - and lays

emphasis on its shape in order to prove the superiority of tears. Similarly, stars only appear beautiful because they seem to be tears of light: "And Stars shew lovely in the Night, / But as they seem the Tears of Light" (43-44).

The climactic effect of stanza twelve is achieved by the exhortation of the poet to his own eyes to weep: "Ope then mine Eyes your double Sluice, / And practise so your noblest Use" (45-46). Tears are a mark of humanity. Other creatures can see and sleep, but only humans (the nymph's fawn is temporarily forgotten) can cry. Stanza thirteen continues the poet's instructions to his own eyes and with its thrice repeated "Now" brings a sense of immediacy to the poem. His eyes must act like two clouds dissolving into rain, and, like the evenly spaced beads on a rosary or the equidistant milestones which mark a traveller's progress (Craze, p.93) must initially offer tears which are equally spaced and balanced. After such restrained weeping which allows for the contemplation of the virtue of tears, the intensity of the weeping can be increased to a fountain-like trickle and then to a flood-like deluge. Stanza fourteen continues this thought. By increasing the intensity of the weeping the stream of tears will overflow their source or spring and the distinctions between eyes and tears will disappear until eyes weep and tears see:

> Thus let your Streams o'reflow your Springs,
> Till Eyes and Tears be the same things:
> And each the other's difference bears;
> These weeping Eyes, those seeing Tears.
> (53-56)

The ideal is to achieve a state in which paradoxically the organs of sight, which contain the retinal lens whereby sight is facilitated, will cease to see, and tears, which lens-like mirror the world, but blind the eye, will achieve vision. Insight is thus of more value than sight. To be wise is to weep as only tears can reveal the true essence of the material world.

The poem in its entirety is dependent on a sense of balance and harmony derived not only from the octosyllabic rhyming couplets, but also from the ordered pattern of the stanzas. Leishman has suggested that the stanzas can be transposed (p.39), but this would be to lose a vital aspect of the poem: its avoidance of the false angles and order imposed by the self-deluding sense of sight. The poem begins by offering nature's own design of having the same organ weeping and seeing, but then seeks to perfect this by finding a way to make the dependent tear and the eye that produces it identical (Friedman in Patrides, p.321). Thus by the end of the poem we are rewarded for our painstaking exploration of the argument with a sense of resolution and completion. In Barbara Smith's term the poem's final line creates in the reader "the expectation of nothing" and Marvell's poem is completed with both moral and geometric harmony.

Like *Eyes and Tears*, *Mourning* has as its central theme the notion of tears, specifically those shed by Chlora. A significant difference between the two poems, however, lies in the tone which here is light-hearted and playful in keeping with the thoroughly detached, witty investigation undertaken by the poet. In addition, while still exploring the nature of tears

and what they represent, Marvell presents a witty discourse on feminine hypocrisy.

The opening apostrophe to the wise diviners of omens forms the question which will be surveyed in the entire poem and indirectly answered in the final stanza:

> What mean these Infants which of late
> Spring from the Starrs of *Chlora's* Eyes?
> (3-4)

If the astrologers can forecast the fate of "humane Off-springs" by consulting the astrological patterns of the "Skies" (2), then they should be able to interpret the "Infants" which spring from the "Starrs" of the weeping woman. The parallel imagery is both neat and witty, though the immediacy of the opening question is somewhat undermined as the poem progresses and the advice of others is called for.

The affinity between the parent eyes and offspring tears is further emphasised in stanza two. The word "confus'd" (5), reminds us of the final stanza of *Eyes and Tears* and forces us to see eyes in tears and tears in eyes. Chlora's eyes are confused because blinded by tears and because the only sight they can perceive is a reflection of themselves in the suspended tears. The teardrops which hang suspended beneath Chlora's eyes mirror her eyes and these liquid reflections appear to be staring towards heaven from whence they originated. These repeated images of liquid spheres, suggestive of

fertility, mirrors and the heavenly origins of tears are further explored in the third stanza. The tears suspended beneath the eyes now "unty themselves away" (10) and fall like a classical libation onto the ground where Strephon lies. The fact that the tears untie "themselves" suggests that they have a will of their own and can decide whether to remain captive or not. It is as though Chlora has only a choice as to where to strew her tears, but none over when and how to allow them to fall. The stanza is extremely vivid and visual, especially in the poet's use of the words "Slow drops" (10) which simultaneously suggest both the action of weeping and its product.

Up to this point the poem has been predominantly serious, an exploration of the nature of Chlora's tears as they progress from their sources or parents to a position of suspension just below her eyes and then gain their freedom as they ready themselves to fall on Strephon's burial place. Now, in stanza four, as the downward path of the tears (contrasting with the earlier upward movement of the eyes reflected in the tears) is impeded by Chlora's bosom, so too the movement of the poem and its tone alter direction as Marvell moves to a mock-serious consideration of the gossips' explanation for the lady's grief. It is suggested that Chlora's grief is feigned, that the tears are only shed to soften her heart so as to allow easier access to another shaft from Cupid's bow:

> Yet some affirm, pretending Art,
> Her Eyes have so her Bosome drown'd,
> Only to soften near her Heart
> A place to fix another Wound.
> (13-16)

The words "pretending Art" are ambiguous and can refer both to the gossips who may be pretending an ability to divine like the astrologers of the opening stanza and also to Chlora herself. By employing such art himself, the speaker is able to maintain his position as an ingenuous witness rather than supporting any of the arguments.

The concept of tears acting as a solvent is familiar from *The Nymph Complaining* whose unhappy statue's tears will erode her stone breast; the difference, however, lies in the degree of sincerity of the grief expressed by the weeper and it is Chlora's artfulness which the gossips seek to emphasise in stanza five. According to these, Chlora's withdrawal into her solitary bower is prompted by vain self-regard, not genuine grief: "And, while vain Pomp does her restrain / Within her solitary Bowr" (17-18). Again the poet maintains the disinterestedness of his speaker by creating a sense of ambiguity. The words "vain Pomp" can refer to Chlora's vanity and thus be evidence of her hypocrisy, or they can imply that her grief is so overwhelming that she cannot bear to be part of the outer world. The gossips, however, contend that her self-love is so intense that it can be compared to the passion felt by Jove for Danae: "She courts her self in am'rous Rain; / Her self both *Danae* and the Showr" (19-20). The myth, by linking the tears and the golden shower into which Jove transformed himself, stresses the precious nature of tears and further emphasises Chlora's alleged narcissism. She is both pursuer and pursued, both lover and beloved, deriving joy from her self-indulgent performance of bereavement. As Colie indicates, she can dispense with a lover in her satisfaction at her own grief (1970, p.126).

Other gossips are even bolder, insisting that she feels only happiness and that anything akin to grief is tossed out of her window like bedroom slops. The vulgarity of the image is deliberately outrageous, and strongly contrasts with the value accorded to tears in the previous stanza; from being compared to a shower of gold, the tears are now bedroom slops. Nevertheless, the suggestion that Chlora is crying for joy remains and in the seventh stanza the gossips further suggest that the tears are not being offered as a tribute to the dead lover, but are cast abroad in the manner of a largesse at the installation of a new emperor, or in this case a prospective new lover.

In stanza eight the speaker reveals how far from the truth these gossips are. Their speculations are as wide as Chlora's tears are deep, and Marvell plays with the notion of dimension as each perfectly balanced half-line (Craze, p.68) leads the reader (like the divers) to the unplumbed depths of the lady's tears:

> How wide they dream! The *Indian* Slaves
> That sink for Pearl through Seas profound,
> Would find her Tears yet deeper Waves
> And not of one the bottom sound.
> (29-32)

Chlora's tears are now presented as something unexplored and mysterious. The exotic Indian slaves, unlike the divers of *Upon Appleton House* who bring up flowers to prove that they have reached the bottom of the meadow, find her tears deeper than the seas in which they dive for pearls. The liquid and spherical imagery of the entire poem seems to coalesce in this reference

to pearls, the incandescent surface of which suggests the reflective nature of the teardrop, as do their shape and value. The imagery too suggests that the divers are diving to find the reasons for Chlora's tears while paradoxically diving in the tears themselves. The grammatical pun on "sound" as both verb and adjective (Colie, 1970, p.93) depicts emotion as both profound and shallow. The tears do not have a sound bottom in that their depth cannot be measured and the reasons for Chlora's weeping lack a sound foundation.

In the final stanza the speaker, although he moves away from Chlora's specific case to the generic "Women", indirectly offers an answer to the question with which the poem began. Like John Donne in *Twicknam Garden* who suggests that it is impossible to judge a woman's emotions from her tears -

> Alas, hearts do not in eyes shine,
> Nor can you more judge woman's thoughts by tears,
> Than by her shadow, what she wears
> (23-25)

- the speaker keeps his true feelings to himself, refuses to dispute the allegations of the gossips, and offers only the final ironic comment that if women weep it is to be supposed that they grieve. With this magnanimous politeness he ends his poem and puts paid to any further speculation about the reasons for Chlora's tears by revealing the folly of those who try to guess that which is both literally and figuratively unfathomable.

CHAPTER FOUR

FRAMES, ENCLOSURES AND REFLECTIONS

Upon Appleton House and *Bermudas*, as we saw in Chapter Two, are circular in design, ending where they began. The circular shape frames these poems, confining and delineating an enclosed space. These frames have the same function as a picture-frame which acts as a mould, giving its contents a certain form (Bouleau, p.37). Beneath the surface of a painting lies what Bouleau calls the painter's secret geometry: lines and shapes hidden from view but essential to the painting's construction (p.37). They form the basis of the painting and secretly lead our eyes around the completed work. Like a painter, Marvell uses the hidden geometry of lines and shapes to convey moral principle; he also resembles a visual artist in that he places a frame around many of his lyrics to create an enclosed world in which his poetic creations exist. [2]

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[2] R. L. Colie describes this technique on page 118 of *My Ecchoing Song* and I acknowledge my indebtedness to her comments.

Marvell's knowledge of contemporary artistic trends seems to have been substantial. Spencer in his introduction to *Heroic Nature* comments as follows: "[his] knowledge of the pictorial arts, though exhibited informally, seems to have been extensive. His poetry is sprinkled with offhand references to 'landskip' or a portrait, a statue or a '*Basso Relievo*'; he can drop a name like Lely or Rubens and mention in passing the Mexican vogue for 'painting' with brightly colored feathers or the great art collection that Charles I bought from the Duke of Mantua" (p.xiv). Marvell also makes reference to fine art in *Damon the Mower* where the disunion of Damon and his once familiar meadow is initially described in terms of a painting: "While ev'ry thing did seem to paint / The Scene more fit for his complaint" (3-4). In *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow* reference is made to the "softest Pensel" (5) and the changing scene of the meadows in *Upon Appleton House* after the floods have receded is described in terms of newly washed and dyed green silk. The art of embroidery too is not neglected. The nuns in *Upon Appleton House* "paint" with their "Needles" (123), while in the woods the speaker's "*antick Cope*" is in part made up of oak-leaf embroidery (587).

Sometimes, however, Marvell's use of the pictorial arts is displayed in a more emphatic manner. *The Gallery* is an obvious example, both of his knowledge of the pictorial arts and of his creation of an enclosed world. The poem begins with a request by the speaker for Clora to view his soul and judge whether it has been well "contriv'd" (2). The metaphor of the soul or mind as a picture gallery is immediately revealed. The mind's "several lodgings" (3) have been formed into one room and all variety of

thought, the "great A*rras*-hangings made / Of various faces" (5-6), has been laid aside in favour of varied representations of the mistress. This is not the same mind as described in *The Garden* or *The Mower's Song* (which both suggest the power of the mind to transcend its own confines); but rather a mind which is enclosed and self-contained, drawing both Clora and the reader into itself. This inwardness (the tour of the gallery is circular, further emphasising the enclosedness), and the fact that Clora is caught and fixed in a number of poses, raises questions about the nature of artistic creation and its permanence. This is reinforced in stanza six when the real collections of Whitehall and Mantua are contrasted with those of the speaker's mind. Degrees of artificiality are juxtaposed within the confines of an unreal structure.

The first four portraits are carefully balanced: the harsh with the elaborately sensual, the active with the passive, an indoor scene with an outdoor. Clora appears as an "Inhumane Murtheress" (stanza 2), an indolent Aurora slumbering in the east (stanza 3), an "Enchantress" divining from the entrails of her dead lover (stanza 4) and as Venus floating in her pearly boat (stanza 5). Although the formality of the first stanza's "you" and "your" modulates into the more familiar "thou" and "thy" in the rest of the poem, Clora is not depicted with any great emotion. Only the speaker is seen to be emotionally affected when he makes a choice as to which of Clora's many poses he likes the best. The opinion requested of the mistress - "*Clora* come view my Soul, and tell / Whether I have contriv'd it well" (1-2) - is never given: it is the thoughts of the speaker which are of most importance.

Clora is the poet's own artifice, an "artefact of the imagination" (Colie, 1970, p.109). Nature has been turned into art.

The sophisticated and worldly depictions of Clora will in the last stanza give way to a nostalgic remembrance of pastoral innocence. Paradoxically, despite the artifice of the poem's construction and the sophistication of the poet's own art, it is the naturally artless portrait which he prefers. Clora makes no appearance in the concluding stanza except as a construct of the speaker's mind in a pose which he has selected: as a pastoral shepherdess. Both the extravagant sensual indolence and frenetic painful activity of the earlier portraits are displaced by this combination of mild action and tenderness. The movements are natural: the beloved's hair is naturally loose, fanned by the breeze, she plucks flowers to adorn her head and bosom. The pun on "Transplanting" (55), which suggests that the flowers will grow as naturally on the body of the woman as on the "green Hill", emphasises the natural tranquillity of the scene. Every aspect of the stanza stands in direct contrast to the worldly sophistication and artificiality of the preceding portraits. Yet, as Martz indicates, the speaker emphasises that here too is a "Posture" and a "Look", and we are reminded that pastoral itself is the most artificial of genres (Patrides, p.206). In choosing a preferred picture the speaker ceases to be detached and his selection of the initial portrait in which Clora appeared to him returns us to the entrance of the gallery and to the beginning of the speaker's love. All seems artless and natural until it is remembered that the poet is referring to an imagined representation in a gallery of the mind. The gallery or container holds various degrees of artificiality: the last portrait merely appears to be less

artificial than the preceding four. Only art and the power of the imagination have the ability to transcend the laws of the natural world. The flesh-and-blood woman will change, not only her mood and pose will alter according to the dictates of her temperament, but also she is powerless to withstand the ravages of time. The poet, however, by means of his art can *contrive* what he will and, in the confines of his imagined world, it will *remain.*

The Gallery obviously owes much to the visual arts. Colie comments: "Many of the poems he wrote fall into standard forms accommodating ecphrasis, or poetic rendering of a work of art, and follow the Horatian maxim that poetry and painting are alike, *ut pictura poesis*" (1970, p.106). In *Last Instructions to a Painter* Marvell himself notes the similarity of paintings and poetry:

> *Painter* adieu, how well our Arts agree;
> Poetick Picture, Painted Poetry.
> (943-4)

In describing a series of portraits of his mistress the poet offers what can truly be termed "painted poetry", but his debt to the visual arts is more extensive. The tour of the Gallery is both circular and self-enclosed and within this limited space, like the area within a picture frame, the poet creates a feeling of stasis by presenting his mistress as fixed in stationary poses, in what Toliver calls a series of "frozen moments" (p.112). Despite his preference for the ostensibly "natural" final portrait, the speaker turns his beloved into a series of inanimate portraits. He shows her as a multifaceted,

rather tempestuous lady, but denies her all sense of movement and vitality. Marvell frequently gives a visual quality of stillness to his poems by turning natural objects into *objets d' art*, as Colie points out: "[he] plays again and again with artifying nature, and naturalising art" (1970, p.113). Spencer in *Heroic Nature* has noted that one technique of what he terms a "literary pictorialist" is to slow the "movement of descriptive verse passages to achieve a feeling of stasis" (p.xiii, note 2). In *The Gallery*, as discussed above, Clora is viewed more as an object than a person and a similar effect is achieved in *The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun* where the lamenting Nymph imagines a statue of herself replacing herself and loses all the qualities of life except the ability to weep. To compliment Maria Fairfax in *Upon Appleton House* and reward her virtue, the elements which we have seen in their natural state (gardens, woods, river and meadows) repay her gifts of "beauty", "streightness", "sweetness", and "purity" by becoming accoutrements of her boudoir:

> The Meadow Carpets where to tread;
> The Garden Flow'rs to Crown *Her* Head;
> And for a Glass the limpid Brook,
> Where *She* may all *her* Beautyes look;
> But, since *She* would not have them seen,
> The Wood about *her* draws a Skreen.
> (699-704)

The feeling of stasis so achieved gives the verse the feel of a painting. Movement is frozen rather than ongoing, captured and forever stilled. So too, the river which has previously inundated the meadows is later stilled

and described as a "*Chrystal Mirrour*" (636). This "fixity of visual art" (as Toliver terms it) when applied to poetry creates in the verse the stasis of the painting or the emblem.

Alvarez states that the dominant impression of Marvell's poetry is that of a "mind detachedly at play over a number of possible choices" (p.107). As often as Marvell artifies the animate he also, with equal sincerity and conviction, animates the lifeless. Appleton House is endowed with qualities of consciousness and movement which allow it to swell with pride when the Lord Fairfax enters: "But where he comes the swelling Hall / Stirs" (51-2). Marvell is able to see things from several different points of view simultaneously. Fairfax is praised for his choice of the contemplative life which allows him to "retreat" from his own "brightness" (*Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow*, 78), yet Cromwell is lauded for deeds performed in the active world:

> Much to the man is due.
> Who, from his private Gardens, where
> He liv'd reserved and austere,
> .....
> Could by industrious Valour climbe
> To ruine the great Work of Time
> (*An Horatian Ode*, 28-34)

Frequently the poet seems to be using the same methods that Cezanne was later to translate into visual terms in his painting *The Apple Basket*. This painting was constructed as though the artist perceived each element of the

still life from a different point of view. As Weismann indicates, "it is the simultaneous presentation of these separate and uncompromised views which unsettles us .... It creates an illusion of space that is ambiguous" (Bouleau, p.249).

Marvell's creation of ambiguous space, perhaps, has its origins in fine art. It is possible, given his knowledge of the pictorial arts, that he was familiar with the anamorphic style of painting such as the portrait of Edward VI by William Scrots (1546) which remains out of focus until viewed from the bottom right. The poet, too, with his love of shifts in perspective and scale seems to be following in the footsteps of Holbein whose famous painting *The Ambassadors* (1533) is totally realistic except for the anamorphised *memento mori* at the ambassadors' feet. When a mirror is held to the right of the picture this is revealed as a skull, but the rest of the picture, previously in perfect focus, becomes distorted and unrecognisable. [3] Even more elaborate steps must be taken to achieve a focused view of *Descent From The Cross* after Rubens (first half of the seventeenth century), which requires a cylindrical mirror to be placed in the centre of the picture to correct the perspectival distortion (Milman p.100). In the light of these pictorial examples, Marvell's manipulation of scale and perspective is not so surprising. Even his oak-leaf-clad "prelate of the grove" is reminiscent of Arcimboldo's fruit and vegetable portraits. What becomes clear is that the poet is constantly reminding us that true vision depends as much on the position of the viewer as on the object to be viewed. So, in *Upon Appleton*

[3] R. L. Colie mentions this painting on page 210 of *My Ecchoing Song* and I acknowledge my indebtedness to her explanation of anamorphosis.

House, the disembodied eye ("When first the Eye this Forrest sees", 497), as it floats around unimpeded, will receive different visions depending on its point of view. The wood can appear firstly as "*Wood* not *Trees*" from the outside, but when viewed from a different perspective, individual trees come into focus as distinct as "*Corinthean Porticoes*" wherein the activities of a variety of birds can be discerned.

Since Marvell's own contemporaries also sought to offer an ambiguous representation of space it is not surprising that he too, like the *trompe-l'oeil* artist who manages to confuse the viewer by creating the illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface, often deceives his readers about whether they are inside or outside the frame. He frequently uses the terms "within" and "without", but as Colie points out, he never fully clarifies their definition (1970, p.219). [4]

In *The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun* the sense of doubleness, created by the frequent word-play and by the contrasts of naiveté and experience, is echoed by this type of visual duality. The whiteness of the faun is stressed not so much by a description of the colour of its skin, but by the fact that when resting on a bed of lilies it is invisible:

> Among the beds of Lillyes, I
> Have sought it oft, where it should lye;

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[4] I am indebted to Colie's *My Ecchoing Song* (Part IV, Chapters Three and Four) for my understanding of Marvell's use of the terms 'within' and 'without'.

Yet could not, till it self would rise,
Find it, although before mine Eyes.
(77-80)

We do not always see what is before our eyes because the object sought merges with its surroundings and the categories of within and without become confused. Had it survived, the faun would have become "Lillies without, Roses within" (92), taking on so completely the qualities of its setting that both its inside and outside become indistinguishable from its surroundings.

Nowhere does the relationship between within and without become more confused than in *Upon Appleton House*. Fairfax retires from the military sphere, the world without, but the descriptions of his retired world, the world within, are frequently couched in the language of war. His daughter is being carefully nurtured within the frame of the estate in order to be launched in matrimony to the world beyond. The nuns sought to lure Isabella into the world within the cloister and paradoxically succeeded, but were dispossessed themselves and forced to move without. The poet is within the protected world surrounded by the "sober Frame" (1) yet finds it necessary to take refuge in the wood, an area which appears to be one thing when viewed from without and something very different when viewed from the inside: "Dark all without it knits; within / It opens passable and thin" (505-6). Even more confusing is Thestylis' exclamation "he call'd us *Israelites*" (406), which for a moment pretends that the poet has been overheard and forced to yield the role of narrator to one of his characters.

As Roth points out: "One of the ways Marvell disorients his reader is to trick the eye so that it cannot tell if it is viewing a scene from the outside looking in or from the inside looking out" (p.273). The very elements of the Appleton estate seem to suffer from the same confusion. After the flood, the river, now a "*Chrystal Mirrour*", creates confusion by the clarity of its reflections: "all things gaze themselves, and doubt / If they be in it or without" (637-8).

These mirror-like reflections suggest the same kind of duality that pervades the entire poem. By repeated reflections, in addition to shifts in scale and viewpoint, the poet constantly reminds us that there is more than one way of seeing. In discussing Marvell's "talent for crowding infinite riches...into little space", Friedenreich points out that "a smooth line that at first appears to be so comprehensible and so neat soon betrays us into the apprehension of multiform possibilities" (p.154). Descriptive language frequently turns back upon itself in what Cook terms "self-reflective" imagery (p.156). Such imagery suggests that one thing may appear to be two things at once. In *On a Drop Of Dew*, the drop is "like its own Tear" (13), simultaneously both that which weeps and that which is wept. So too in *Upon Appleton House* the river drowns in itself ("The River in it self is drown'd", 471) and even more astonishing, corrupt flesh tempts otherwise impotent sin ("As first our *Flesh* corrupt within / Tempts impotent and bashful *Sin*", 555-6). Here the usual tempter becomes the tempted; and in *An Horatian Ode*, Charles appears as both chased and pursuer: "That *Charles* himself might chase / To *Caresbrooks* narrow case" (51-2). To describe this mingling of entities, or the technique of one thing almost

imperceptibly assuming another identity, Kitty Scoular uses the terminology of painting (p. 189). The term *Harmoge*, the subtlety in shifting from one colour to another, aptly describes the confusion which arises when the poet "leaves indistinct the bounds between things" (p.189) as he does in *A Dialogue between the Soul and Body* where it is unclear who is the captive and who the captor, who the tormented and who the tormentor.

The poem begins with the Soul's poignant cry for release from its fleshy prison and an end to its unrelieved suffering of torment and pain. The body is a "Dungeon" (1) wherein the soul is "inslav'd" (2); it can neither move freely nor escape labouring for its captor. Its agony is conveyed by the harsh alliterative expressions of its imprisonment. In particular, the repeated 'b', 'f' and 'd' sounds of lines three to six jar on the ear and create the sense of pain and agony:

> With bolts of Bones, that fetter'd stands
> In Feet; and manacled in Hands.
> Here blinded with an Eye; and there
> Deaf with the drumming of an Ear.
> (3-6)

Bone bolts render it immobile, feet fetter and hands manacle it in place to suffer more and more agony. The body-prison's senses of sight and hearing blind and deafen the soul, forcing on it unwanted impressions of the corporeal world while distracting it from its own spiritual vision. Like a prisoner in chains the soul is trapped and suspended by the body's nerves, arteries and veins and forced to endure the additional torture of empty-

headed vanity and double-hearted duplicity: both of them anathema to its pure and spiritual nature.

In the second stanza, the body does not seek to defend itself against this catalogue of torments, but launches into an attack of its own, also beginning with a rhetorical question and expressing similar claims: "O who shall me deliver whole, / From bonds of this Tyrannic Soul?" (11-12). The prisoner-soul is now "Tyrannic", holding the body captive from within and forcing it into an upright position as though impaled on a stake. Such an unnatural position causes the stretched-up body to teeter forever on the edge of an abyss comprised of its own self: "That mine own Precipice I go" (14). The lethargic body, which naturally inclines to a more recumbent position, is further tormented by the soul's emotions and desires which heat and stir it to unwelcomed activity and which, the body petulantly asserts, cause it no pleasure, the same effects being equally derivable from a fever. The soul, says the body, is merely spiteful, and lacking an alternative outlet for its ill-humour, directs it all at the body which only exists so that it can be allowed to perish:

> And warms and moves this needless Frame:
> (A Fever could but do the same.)
> And, wanting where its spight to try,
> Has made me live to let me dye.
> (15-18)

One of the many surprising aspects of this poem is its lack of emphasis (so prevalent in other debates and dialogues on similar topics) on death. As

Friedenreich points out, all reference to the horror of the grave is omitted and death is portrayed as annoying rather than fearful (pp. 166-7). Equally startling is the seeming advocacy of the life of indolent sensuality usually eschewed in favour of spiritual purity. The body feels that it is possessed by an "ill Spirit" (20) and so gives the character of a practitioner of black magic to the soul - which is usually considered to be the best part of a creature. The body longs for an inert existence untrammelled by the soul's knowledge and emotions. It wishes to "rest" (19), but is unable to do so while inhabited by the soul.

In stanza three, the soul continues the motif of diabolic possession, but casts itself as a victim of "Magick" (21). It suffers a double torment as its own grief is exacerbated by being trapped within the grief of the body. In isolation the soul cannot feel, but, because shackled by the body's entrails and skeleton, it is forced to suffer the pain of the body's ailments: "I feel, that cannot feel, the pain" (24). It further grieves because it is aware that its own self perpetuates the misery:

> And all my Care its self employes,
> That to preserve, which me destroys:
> Constrain'd not only to indure
> Diseases, but, whats worse, the Cure:
> (25-28)

All its "Care", both interest and troubles, is devoted to preserving the body which torments it. It cannot cease to be righteous, yet by so doing ensures the continued existence of its tormentor; it suffers the body's fleshy

diseases, and, even more unbearable for one who longs to return to the realms of spiritual purity beyond the confines of the flesh, must endure the cures of them. The maritime metaphor with which the stanza ends reinforces the irreconcilable opposition of the body and soul. For the soul to reach port is to gain freedom from its corporeal prison; but for the body it means death and an end to its existence. It is a bitter disappointment for the soul that the body is healed of its maladies, a disaster akin to a shipwreck. The body's metaphoric seaworthiness is abhorrent to the soul and means the continuation of its suffering: "And ready oft the Port to gain / Am Shipwrackt into Health again" (29-30).

In reply, the body turns the soul's literal description of health and disease into metaphor, and for the first time in the poem points an accusatory finger at its enemy by replacing the rhetorical questions of the second stanza with the direct use of the second person: "The Maladies Thou me dost teach" (32). It is forced to be emotionally affected because of the soul's mental awareness, and for such "Maladies" there is no cure. The soul has knowledge of hope, fear, love, hatred, joy and sorrow, but the body suffers the debilitating symptoms of experiencing these emotions. Knowledge of the soul's emotions is forced upon the body by its experience of their physical accompaniments; and once such knowledge is imprinted on the memory it cannot be forgotten. Just as the soul which "cannot feel" experiences pain, so the body, which cannot know, knows and remembers. The couplet "Which Knowledge forces me to know; / And Memory will not foregoe" (39-40) reinforces the interdependence of body and soul which has been stressed throughout the entire poem. This is unusual, as Colie

suggests: "the poet not only overturns the usual expectations of any well-read reader by making the soul and the body into whining complainers instead of aggressive advocates for exclusive programs of life, but also presents them so that their traditional independence and opposition are seen to be illusory" (1970, p.57). They rail against each other, demanding sympathy for their plights, but fail to accept how inextricably bound they are. There are no clear-cut distinctions here such as exist between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure, where identification of tempted and tempter is easy; instead, outlines are blurred, and the parallel complaints using the same metaphors and the language of paradox make it difficult to align ourselves with either combatant. The puzzling final four lines neither resolve the argument, nor clarify the position of the reader.

Initially it seems odd that the symmetry of the poem should be destroyed by extending the body's final speech, as though these lines belong to the end of another ten-line unit, but there seems to be no such break in the sense. [5] The body has complained of the pains it has had to suffer as a result of enforced knowledge and now goes on to give an example of the soul's "wit":

> What but a Soul could have the wit
> To build me up for Sin so fit?

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[5] Margoliouth (p.249) points out that Leishman (p.216) notes that the anonymous corrector of T2 (Bodleian Manuscript) has drawn his pen through the last four lines of the fourth stanza and has written below: *Desunt Multa.*

So Architects do square and hew,
Green Trees that in the Forest grew.
(41-44)

Only the soul has sufficient intelligence to construct a body fit for sin, capable of being swayed by bodily temptations. The body, in its desire to defame the soul, forgets that both itself and the soul owe their existence to another creator. In the final couplet the body, unwittingly, further stresses this. The analogy equates the soul with architects who square and hew, and the body with the green trees used in construction. The body, surely, seeks to align itself with the natural "green" world, incapable of sin when uninhabited by the soul; but by so doing the body links the architect soul with the divine architect, God, who has created all that exists. By this argument the body gains a measure of sympathy, but simultaneously invites an equal amount (though indirectly) for the soul and the issue remains unresolved. Ultimately what we must remember is that both body and soul are behaving naturally. As Cullen points out: "the soul's nature is heaven-bound, the body pulls it downward; the body's nature is earth-bound, the soul pulls it upward" (p.174). There is more than one point of view and it is sometimes unnecessary to allocate rightness and wrongness, or to attempt to elevate one aspect of nature at the expense of another. Human existence is fallen and therefore complex beyond our understanding. Much is revealed by our sense of sight, but it is not always accompanied by insight.

Enclosed spaces and containers abound in Marvell's lyrics. A drop of dew, a garden, a country estate, a soul in its fleshy prison, an island, all

are areas contained and enclosed. The symmetrical proportions of *Bermudas*, with circularity as both motif and frame, bespeak its divinely created beauty and perfection. Within the frame of the poem, and of course on the island, all is ordered and balanced and the pilgrims rejoice in their sensuous paradise where it is always spring. There is a perfect correspondence between container and contained. Similarly, within the "sober Frame" of Appleton House, Fairfacian harmony and restraint apply, but, as we have seen in *The Dialogue Between the Soul and Body*, the same cannot be said for all who inhabit a framed area with which they are identified and which serves as an emblem for their moral characteristics.

Figures of innocence such as the Nymph and Maria Fairfax are frequently contained within an enclosed landscape that forms their world. In *The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun*, the Nymph is completely associated with her surroundings. The repetition of the first-person pronoun, especially in lines 7-12, 26-30, 44-48 and 60-61, suggests how closely she is identified with the narrow confines of her world (Colie, 1970, p.89). She believes that she has created a garden of her own, an area where she is protected from the ravages of the outside world, but, as the actions of the heartless Sylvio and the "wanton troopers" indicate, she is mistaken. The frame around her world is incomplete and cannot safeguard her innocence from ultimately fatal contact with the world beyond.

The feared fate of the Nymph is a reminder that the area within the frame is not always secure. Unless the integrity of the frame is upheld and the reciprocity of container and contained is maintained, a loss of innocence

and identity will result. In *On a Drop of Dew* the drop only manages to retain its purity by a strenuous maintenance of form and shape, by containing itself and cutting itself off from any contact with the outside world. It "Frames ...its native Element" (8) and "Round in itself incloses" (6) the radiance of its heavenly home. It is only because it remains undefiled that it can eventually be exhaled to the skies. The soul, too, would be ineligible for ascension if it did not rigorously exclude the corporeal world. In the same manner as the parallel line, the geometrically perfect circle and firmness in contrast to softness are all equated with virtue, so the more defined the shape of the space enclosed, the more perfect the world. To understand the proper relationship of virtue and sin in an enclosed world we are given the example of Maria Fairfax in *Upon Appleton House* who maintains the straightness and fixity of her world without offending against natural order. Her influence over the landscape, particularly intense as day draws to a close, is seen as one of solidification. "Loose Nature" (657) out of respect for her when she walks abroad at night "recollect[s]" (658) itself and with the advent of the "modest *Halcyon*" (669) which resembles her, is benumbed. The English kingfisher is linked with the Classical Greek halcyon which charmed wind and wave to an absolute stillness (Craze, p.246). The world which has Maria for its goddess is imbued with a calm and tranquillity described as a solidification of the elements. The air becomes "viscous" (673), the stream gels and encloses the fish as though in crystal. No comets or meteors disturb the quiet of this world and under Maria's benign influence "*Nature* is wholly *vitrifi'd*" (688). Shape is maintained in harmony with the natural world, and with its full co-operation.

Marvell makes it clear that such maintenance of shape is not easy and may happen for the wrong reasons as we have seen in *A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body*. It is possible to be deceived into seeing an enclosed space as something which it is not. In *Clorinda and Damon*, Clorinda, in her role as temptress, seeks to lure Damon into a cave: "Seest thou that unfrequented Cave?" (9) which she depicts as "Loves Shrine" (10). Damon, bolstered by his recent meeting with Pan, is not deluded. He sees the cave as "Virtue's Grave" (10) and retains his innocence. Clorinda is certainly an unskilled temptress in comparison to the nun who tries to seduce Isabella Thwaites in *Upon Appleton House*. All within the enclosed frame of the convent is perverted. Even before the poet offers a list of the nuns' moral offences, we realise that there is something wrong with their enclosed world. The nuns rigidly maintain the shape of their world, not in order to conserve their own purity, but rather to hide all knowledge of their unholy lives from the outside world: "These Walls restrain the World without / But hedge our Liberty about" (99-100). The convent's outward locking gates, and the over-stressed exclusion of the world beyond, further emphasise their guilt. The convent is a false Eden, an enclosed world in which a sinful existence is maintained.

Another false Eden is described in *The Mower against Gardens*. In this poem the mower-speaker depicts the walled garden as a place of stagnant decay where nature itself is seduced into unnatural behaviour by lascivious man:

He first enclos'd within the Gardens square

A dead and standing pool of Air:
And a more luscious Earth for them did knead,
Which stupifi'd them while it fed.
(5-8)

All within the enclosed space is unnatural. Nature, previously "plain and pure" (4), has been seduced by "Luxurious" (1) or lascivious man, tempted into accepting a more "luscious Earth" (7) specially kneaded into something pliant and over-sensual. The language of these opening lines is so cloyingly sensual that it is no wonder that the plants are "stupifi'd". The word "knead" (7) suggests the artfulness which man has used to give expression to this "Vice" (1); nothing here is firm or resolute, but is rather soft and yielding, heady and overwhelming. Within the enclosed space, the plants, which should be the expression of nature at its most beautiful and innocent, behave artificially: as the mower claims, "'Tis all enforc'd" (31). How different is this forced and manipulated sensuality to the naturalness of the meadows "Where willing Nature does to all dispence / A wild and fragrant Innocence" (33-34). Here within is all perversion and art, while without is innocent and natural, the place tilled by "*Fauns and Faryes*" (35) and the place where the gods dwell.

Damon the mower, on the other hand, inhabits a miniature Eden with which he is in perfect harmony until the arrival of Juliana. In contrast to Maria Fairfax, the Juliana who torments Damon in *Damon the Mower* "melts" rather than "sets" the mower's world. Before Juliana's advent the meadows gave Damon his livelihood and his identity: "I am the Mower *Damon*, known / Through all the Meadows I have mown" (41-2); but her

relentless "scorching beams" (24), hotter than the sun and the dog-star, burn both meadows and mower and overturn the natural order of the environment. Only Juliana is unaffected by the heat, she dries up all the moisture, hoards all the cold in her "Icy Breast" (32) and appropriates to herself all the cures for the extreme temperature. Damon's relationship with nature, as evidenced by nature's concern for him and his welcome reception at fairy celebrations, cannot safeguard him against Juliana's dispassionate scorn. She destroys the natural order of the world within the frame and so leaves Damon homeless. The correspondence between container and contained is revoked, and death is redefined as the only possible cure for the disease of loving Juliana. Much in the poem is humorous and witty, but in the concluding couplet the tone ceases to be burlesque and modulates into a serious contemplation of mortality and man's transitory nature: "'Tis death alone that this must do: / For Death thou art a Mower too" (87-8). Death, too, is a mower, but Damon's destruction of the meadows is seasonal and cyclical, what is mown at harvest-time grows again in Spring. Only once Damon is thrown out of harmony with the natural cadences of his world by Juliana's unseasonal heat, does he see death as the only way of escaping his torment. Slight wounds can be healed by natural remedies, "Shepherds purse" and "Clowns-all-heal" (82), but Juliana's unnaturally caused hurts displace Damon. He can neither seek beyond his own world to find a cure for his alien ills, nor discover anything within it to heal himself. Once a strange and alien element, like the snake in Eden, penetrates the frame of his world, he is rendered powerless and is ultimately dispossessed. The form of the poem enacts this. If the poem ended at stanza ten, then the frame (stanzas 1 & 10) around Damon's song (stanzas 2-9) would be complete. As

though to suggest the collapse of his world, however, the final stanza (11) spoken by Damon describing his imminent death is outside that frame.

In *The Mower's Song* too, the pre-Juliana correspondence between Damon and his world is stressed: "My Mind was once the true survey / Of all these Medows fresh and gay" (1-2). The reciprocity between mower and meadow is described as a mirror reflection. The mower's mind is recreated in the mirror image reflected by the green grass: a more perfect correspondence is impossible. This is the ideal biomorphic relationship, Damon's world is shaped by his own mind. Again, though, the shape of this world is distorted when Juliana interposes her own image between the reflector and the reflected. Once she intrudes within the frame, Damon ceases to be the ordering focus of his world and the meadows develop a mind of their own: one free to register emotions out of tandem with the mower.

The miniature pastoral, *The Mower to the Glo-Worms*, has been termed the slightest of the mower poems, yet, within its small compass of one witty and elegant sentence, Marvell manages to comment profoundly on the alienation of a natural figure from his environment. The poem, though beautiful, is extremely disturbing. The mower's dislocation is paradoxically made more complete by the parallel phrasing of the first three stanzas and the delay of the main clause until the fourth stanza. The symmetry of the poem's form is at odds with its content; and dislocation, not resolution - as the form might suggest - is the result. Tension in the poem is created by the incongruity of the sophisticated language spoken by a supposedly naive and

rustic figure (King, p.133), by the opposition of natural and unnatural light, and by the lack of understanding of his own predicament by the mower who, despite his sometimes articulate language, is unaware of the spiritual significance of his dispossession.

The glow-worms, both as a source of natural light and by the concern they evince for other living things, are an intrinsic part of the landscape. They are "living Lamps" whose light is "dear" (1), "officious" (9) and "courteous" (13). It is by their light that the nightingale composes her "matchless Songs" (4) long after dusk has fallen. She stands in harmonious relationship with her surroundings, a symbol of creativity, like the poet, receiving inspiration from nature, but returning the gift in song. The sound of stanza 1 itself, with its repeated "l", "m", "n" and "s" sounds, emulates the melody of the bird and so emphasises the reciprocity inherent in the relationship of singer and setting. All this, though, is only made possible by the actions of the glow-worms without whose light, as the poet playfully suggests, the nightingale would be unable to compose.

The glow-worms are further apostrophised as "Country Comets" (5). Unlike the heavenly comets which presage events of national significance, they are portents only of the harvest. This comparison does not diminish them. In keeping with their size, the scope of their activities is necessarily limited. Their world is that of the countryside and within this world the readiness of the hay to be harvested is of as much importance as the death of a sovereign to court and parliament. Again the natural harmony of relationship between creature and environment is stressed. The glow-worms

belong in their world and as portents of harvest are associated with a sense of abundance and with the natural rhythm of the seasonal cycle.

The reference to the harvest prepares us for the introduction (in stanza 3) of the mowers who work so late at their reaping that they need the glow-worms to light them home:

> Ye Glo-worms, whose officious Flame
> To wandring Mowers shows the way,
> That in the Night have lost their aim,
> And after foolish Fires do stray.
> (9-12)

The darkness in which these mowers wander is physical, not spiritual. Although they are lost and are misled by the "foolish Fires" of the will-o'-the-wisp, with the aid of the superior light of the glow-worms they will eventually find their way home. The glow-worms can "out-illuminate" any natural competitor, only an unnatural source of light can eclipse them.

The mower of the title, on the other hand, is spiritually lost, led astray by Juliana's false light and so disoriented that even the glow-worms are unable to illuminate his moral darkness:

> Your courteous Lights in vain you wast,
> Since *Juliana* here is come,
> For She my Mind hath so displac'd
> That I shall never find my home.
> (13-16)

He has not always been lost, it is only "Since" he has been charmed by Juliana that his mind has been "displac'd". Unlike the physical wanderings of the tired mowers, this mower's journey through spiritual darkness is permanent, he has lost his home forever. The harmonious relationship between the mower and his world has been destroyed, and his mind "so" displaced that it can never be regained.

In his analysis of this poem Craze notes the following: "Some of Marvell's lyrics travel full circle and finish where they began. This one follows a straight line that starts a long way from the Mower and ends when it reaches him and reveals his plight" (p.156). The non-circularity of this poem is the antithesis of the secure circles of *The Coronet*, *Bermudas* and *On a Drop Of Dew*. The Mower's world loses its shape when Juliana destroys the correspondence between container and contained; and once shapeless it is vulnerable and easily destroyed. In the *Loyall Scot* (34) and *The Last Instructions to a Painter* (668) appear the lines: "Within its Circle knows himselfe secure" and "Within its circle, knows himself secure". Marvell is specifically referring to the arcs described by Captain Douglas's sword, but the lines may be more generally applied to the concept of framed spaces. The area within the circle is secure, but such security is possible only if the shape of the frame is upheld and the reciprocity between the enclosed world and its inhabitant is maintained. The worlds designed with symmetry, balance and proportion according to the rules of "*holy Mathematicks*" are impervious to disruption, those that lack such qualities are not.

CHAPTER FIVE

BEYOND THE FRAME

In the previous chapter enclosedness and the concept of framed spaces were discussed. The concept of space in Marvell's lyrics is complex, and, as has already been noted, the poet does not aim for consistency of argument from one poem to another. In some poems the framed world is perfect, in others it is necessary to move outside a confined space, to go beyond the frame, to reach perfection. In several poems there is a sense of overspilling boundaries, bursting out of the framed space or spiritually moving from the seen world to the imagined realm beyond it.

In *The Match*, Nature's carefully stored treasure and Love's magazine have no value when closeted separately. Only when the various items fuse in themselves and then ultimately come together in an explosive burst of passion is true love discovered. The poem is remarkable for the sense it gives of the movement from the confined to the unlimited. Nature hoards her treasures, she seldom unlocks them, believing them secure. It is not she, but the elements themselves, recognising their own likeness, which

unite to form Celia. Similarly, Love lays aside his explosive chemicals behind fortified double gates and rarely inspects them. Again it is the chemicals themselves which react with each other to create the masculine "I" (36) who burns so hot and bright. The first eight stanzas of the poem all suggest enclosure, inwardness and confinement. Up to this point, the poem is completely balanced with four stanzas allocated to the description of nature's treasure and the formation of Celia and four to Love's magazine and his creation. With the ninth stanza, however, comes a total release:

> Thus all his fewel did unite
> To make one fire high:
> None ever burn'd so hot, so bright;
> And *Celia* that am I
> (33-6)

We now begin to feel a sense of spilling over as this fifth stanza is devoted to the masculine being, breaking the parallelism which we initially expected would be maintained. It is as though in combining, the three elements of gunpowder which love has stored (Craze, p.49) explode beyond the confines of the magazine where they are housed and beyond the form of the poem itself. The final stanza, though, returns us to a sense of stability:

> So we alone the happy rest,
> Whilst all the World is poor,
> And have within our Selves possest
> All Love's and Nature's store.
> (37 - 40)

This sense of breaking out of a confined space is more overtly present in *Musicks Empire*. Here Marvell uses an extended metaphor to compare the growth of music from birth to maturity to the establishment of a political and social empire. When first the world was created, music knew only one note played on a solitary instrument by the "Jarring Windes" (2). The sound is rooted in the echo of hollow rocks and the cascade of water: "All Musick was a solitary sound, / To hollow Rocks and murm'ring fountains bound" (3-4). The word "bound" sets the tone of restriction and confinement of these rough and unregulated noises. It is almost as if the noises themselves are held prisoner in the entities which reverberate in the wind. Only with the introduction of Jubal in stanza two do we begin to experience a sense of freedom and release:

> *Jubal* first made the wilder Notes agree;
> And *Jubal* tuned Musicks *Jubilee*:
> He call'd the *Ecchoes* from their sullen Cell,
> And built the Organs City where they dwell.
> (5-8)

Jubal, the father of all who handle the harp and organ, [6] first calls harmony into being and allows for music's "jubilee" or emancipation. He frees the echoes from their gloomy cells and brings them to live in the "Organs City". In terms of the allegory of the poem, we have moved from the creation of the world to the establishment of the first city.

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[6] Genesis IV: 21.

In the third stanza, the notes now seek partners and from the marriage of treble and bass results harmony. The word "consort" (9) carries the dual meaning of the notes not only seeking a mate, but also of selecting one with whom they will be harmoniously combined. The result of these unions, the "Progeny of numbers new" (11), goes out beyond the city founded by Jubal and begins to set up new colonies. The movement of the poem is all outward and expansive. From the original natural noise "bound" to the rocks and water and the echoes in their "sullen Cell" the new numbers, or new groups of notes, embark on journeys to new worlds. These new worlds are characterised as musical instruments in the fourth stanza. Some of the pioneers select the lute, the viol or the cornet while still others choose either string or wind instruments, but all combine, in stanza five, to make music:

> Then Musick, the Mosaique of the Air,
> Did of all these a solemn noise prepare:
> With which She gain'd the Empire of the Ear,
> Including all between the Earth and Sphear.
> (17-20)

The synesthetic phrase "Musick, the Mosaique of the Air" beautifully paints the invisible aural tones of harmony in the visible colours of a work of mosaic. The diversified tones which combine to create music can be seen in the tiny fragments which unite to form a work of art. It is as if the very notes themselves have a tangible existence even though they are constructed of nothing more substantial than air. Music, then, prepares a sacred noise and with it gains ascendency over hearing, the "Empire of the Ear", which

includes everything between the earth and the sphere. Oddly, the music of the spheres is omitted, possibly because it is not part of the "creation" proper. The rising crescendo of this fifth stanza marks the progress made by music in achieving freedom and in transcending the limitations of an enclosed space. Music is free to roam the earth and to rise heavenwards unconfined and harmonious.

The poem is concluded with a compliment to the Lord Fairfax [7] who is praised as being a "gentler Conqueror" (22) than music and a person to whom the "Victorious sounds" (21) should pay tribute. Both Fairfax's humility and piety are stressed in the final couplet of the poem - "Who though He flies the Musick of his praise, / Would with you Heavens Hallelujahs raise" (23-24) - and the poem ends on the triumphant note of joyful sounds rising upwards to heaven.

Of this poem Leishman writes "the 'allegory' will not bear close inspection: the correspondence between literal and metaphorical...is continually breaking down..." (p.220). It is true that the allegory is not perhaps as well defined as that of *On a Drop of Dew*, as Leishman himself notes, but it does give one a rewarding sense of both literal and figurative expansion and of movement from the restricted to the unconfined.

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[7] Hollander believes that the compliment is to Oliver Cromwell (p. 314), but, as Margoliouth indicates (p. 267), a comparison of this final couplet with lines 75-6 of *Upon the Hill and Grove at Bill-borow* - "But Peace (if you his favour prize) / That Courage its own Praises flies" - suggests that the compliment is to Fairfax.

The Match and *Musicks Empire* describe one sort of movement from confinement to release, but far more frequently the lyrics go completely beyond the frame and describe worlds which must be imagined with the mind rather than seen with the eye. Jonathan Swift defined vision as "the art of seeing things invisible", and several of Marvell's lyrics demand that we also define vision in this way.

In *A Dialogue between Thyrsis and Dorinda*, Thyrsis instructs Dorinda to

> Turn thine Eye to yonder Skie,
> There the milky way doth lye;
> 'Tis a sure but rugged way,
> That leads to Everlasting day.
> (9-12)

Thyrsis and Dorinda already appear to live in an ideal arcadia, but come to recognise that beyond the confines of what they can see lies true perfection where the dark of night is unknown. The phrase "Everlasting day" is reminiscent of the "Eternal Day" of *On a Drop Of Dew*, the fountain from whence the soul sprang, and suggests that the true paradise lies in a realm which can be perceived, but not seen. The most startling aspect of this lyric is the manner in which the lovers exchange their known world for the unknown:

> Then let us give *Carillo* charge o'th Sheep,
> And thou and I'le pick poppies and them steep
> In wine, and drink on't even till we weep,

So shall we smoothly pass away in sleep.
(45-48)

Suicide is advocated as the means of reliquishing known arcadian pleasures, usually themselves the ideal retreat in pastoral poetry, for the imagined perfection of a perceived realm.

In a similar manner, the Resolved Soul in *The Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure* responds to one of Created Pleasure's temptations by saying: "If things of Sight such Heavens be, / What Heavens are those we cannot see?" (55-56) and the entire lyric embraces the spiritual and invisible and rejects the worldly and sensual. The poem opens with a ten line hortatory chorus using the language of the armourer reminiscent of Saint Paul's epistle to the Ephesians (Margoliouth, p.242). [8] An interesting note in these opening lines is that there is some doubt about the outcome of the battle between Pleasure and Soul: "Now, if thou bee'st that thing Divine, / In this day's Combat let it shine" (7-8).

Pleasure begins the combat with a confident welcome, displaying cunning intelligence and self-assuredness. The overt flattery is supposed to disarm the Soul and make him more susceptible to the temptations which follow. The invitation to "Lay aside that Warlike Crest" (13) is a suggestion for the Soul to remove his "Helmet bright" (3), and an attempt to disarm him metaphorically. The first enticement presented to the Soul is to the sense of taste and the Soul is invited to sample, and be delighted by, an

[8] Ephesians VI: 14-16.

abundance of rich fruits and flowers. The Soul's response, both to this temptation and those which follow, stresses the difference between worldly and spiritual pleasures: "I sup above, and cannot stay / To bait so long upon the way" (17-18). The calm, measured iambs of this response contrast sharply with the more involved and exuberant trochaic heptasyllabics of Pleasure's speech and serve to mark the extent of the difference between their visions of the world. Similarly, the simplicity of the Soul's vocabulary is in contrast with the elaborateness of that used by Pleasure. In his first temptation Pleasure displays a subtle cunning, but the Soul, too, by revising the metaphor to suit his own argument, shows clarity of thought. The Soul has no use for earthly abundance, nor does he wish to waste any time on physical pleasures during his journey to the realm above. The idea of a journey to another realm is conveyed by the verb "bait" which means to take refreshments while travelling (Peguigney in Friedenreich, p.79).

Pleasure next invites the Soul to wallow on soft pillows evenly strewn with rose petals. The repeated 'l' and 's' sounds heighten the softness and malleability of this appeal to the sense of touch. The allure of the image is overwhelming, but the Soul again adapts the metaphor and rejects the sensual in favour of the reward of spiritual rest: "My gentler rest is on a Thought, / Conscious of doing what I ought" (23-24).

The third temptation appeals to the sense of smell:

> It thou bee'st with Perfumes pleas'd,
> Such as oft the Gods appeas'd,

Thou in fragrant Clouds shalt show
Like another God below.
(25-28)

The word "like" suggests the presumptuousness of pretending to be an earthly god and the Soul's reply makes clear that the odour of humility is far more pleasing both to himself and heaven: "A Soul that knowes not to presume / Is Heaven's and its own perfume" (29-30).

Pleasure now turns to the sense of sight and displays a sly logic in a temptation which initially appears to be irrefutable. Instead of summoning the enticement of the vision of earthly beauties, he seeks to entrap the Soul by inviting him to view his own face. If the Soul is the true reflection of the beauty and perfection of the Creator, then he cannot refuse to accept that his own reflection is the most beautiful without slighting its maker. The Soul, however, sidesteps the trap neatly by drawing a distinction between the supreme art of the Creator in shaping all beauty and the products of that art which in themselves have no intrinsic beauty. Only the Creator's skill is of value, the rest is simply matter glorified by the maker's hand: "When the Creator's skill is priz'd, / The rest is all but Earth disguis'd" (35-36).

Marvell leaves final place of honour in this series of temptations to the sense of hearing rather than the sense of sight, normally considered the noblest. The allure of music flusters the Soul for the only time in the poem and his response is spread over four lines instead of two. The Soul acknowledges that he could be so tempted if he had "any time to lose" (41), but remains firm in his resolve. After momentarily admitting weakness the

Soul regains his composure and retorts that if he can withstand the temptation of something truly appealing then he cannot be overcome by anything. The pun on "Chordage", both musical chord and bondage, emphasises his determination: "None can chain a mind / Whom this sweet Chordage cannot bind" (43-44).

To mark the end of this first section of the poem the chorus re-enters, but adds a pentameter rhyming couplet to its previously regular octosyllabics, the only place where, as Peguigney points out, the norm of four stresses is exceeded (Friedenreich, p.80). The couplet marks the move from the temptation of the senses to the temptation of the mind. The chorus is clearly partisan and urges the Soul to persevere in his rejection of worldly pleasures. Again, too, as in the opening song, the word "if" suggests that the outcome of the battle between the two combatants is not guaranteed: "And if thou overcom'st, thou shalt be crown'd" (50).

In his renewed attack Pleasure now mixes trochees with iambs as though this prosody, borrowed both from the Soul and the chorus, will present a more dignified facade. He begins by offering the Soul the ultimate in earthly feminine beauty and devotion. Though all that appeals to the senses would be combined in this one perfect form, the lines are more intellectual than sensual. This is an appeal to an intellectual perception of beauty as a merging of all that earthly perfection has to offer. The Soul responds with the response previously quoted: "If things of Sight such Heavens be, / What Heavens are those we cannot see?" (55-56). The invisible beauty is for the Soul more real than that which can be seen. He

does not deny that things of the earth can be beautiful, but for him insight is more pleasurable and revealing than sight. The Soul's vision is focused on the world beyond rather than on the corporeal world of Pleasure.

Pleasure next offers both worldly riches and power only to have them scorned by the virtuous Soul who now turns to paradox as a means of rejection. In offering gold to "purchase all below" (59), Pleasure emphasises the underlying difference between himself and the Soul. The world below holds no attraction for the Soul whose thoughts are clearly sighted on the world above. Gold, too, the Soul answers, has no value except as a means of setting a price for the sale of other commodities and anything that can be sold is worthless. Only spiritual virtues are of worth and these, unlike gold and goods, can never be sold. Similarly, the offer of glory is rejected on the grounds that the only true friendship is sincerity to self and one's principles and that the only true slavery is a self-embracing subjection of the world to the spirit.

The last temptation is the desire for knowledge:

> Thou shalt know each hidden Cause;
> And see the future Time:
> Try what depth the Centre draws;
> And then to Heaven climb.
> (69-72)

Knowledge, and specifically scientific knowledge, is offered as a means of reaching heaven. Each hidden cause will be revealed by a study of physics,

a knowledge of the earth and its geology will allow for its depths to be plumbed, and astronomy will direct one's journey to heaven.

In this series of temptations Pleasure has offered a powerful combination of physical beauty, material wealth, worldly domination and control over the natural world by means of scientific knowledge. He has omitted only that which has any meaning for the Soul - humility - and this is what is stressed in the Soul's response: "None thither mounts by the degree / Of Knowledge, but Humility" (73-74). Knowledge of astronomy may allow for a route through the stars to be plotted, but only humility allows access to heaven. The word "degree" suggests ascending or descending as on the rungs of a ladder, but, according to the Soul, the only way to mount, or proceed upwards, is to begin from a lowly position with an acceptance of one's own inferiority to the spiritual and divine.

The final word of the Soul's retort, "Humility" (74), is followed by the chorus's "*Triumph, triumph, victorious Soul*", and the contrast serves to emphasise the Soul's paradox that humility offers the only way in which to ascend to paradise in triumph and joyfulness. The chorus continues its song of celebration and joy:

> *The World has not one Pleasure more:*
> *The rest does lie beyond the Pole,*
> *And is thine everlasting Store.*
> (76-78)

The Soul has managed to eschew all earthly temptations and in reward will gain all the pleasures of heaven which lie "*beyond the Pole*", out of reach of sin-stained Pleasure and greater by far than anything he could offer. The word "*rest*" implies both the remainder of pleasures and the tranquillity of heavenly rest after a battle well fought. These heavenly pleasures are also everlasting, immortal rewards, unlike the perishable temptations available on earth, which are fitting treasure for the Soul whose insight has already perceived their value long before his eyes have seen their beauty.

The movement of this poem has been a mixture of the Soul's victorious attempts to move to the world beyond the frame of mortality and temporality and Pleasure's machinations to restrain him within it. It has been the world outside the frame, though, which has been depicted as a realm of perfection and reward for earthly abnegation. In *The Garden*, the situation is somewhat different.

The poem celebrates the state of innocence such as enjoyed by prelapsarian man, but, with a certain playfulness which militates against a too serious reading, Marvell also makes clear that he, as a fallen man, is presenting an ideal which is only a "temporarily conceded joy" (Leishman, p.311). Marvell's delight in a paradoxical and hyperbolic argument beneath the descriptive surface is easily perceived, as is his consummate ability to twist the conventional into an original blend of the conceptual and the visual. As Bennett suggests, the poem is not simple and delight often stems from the contrast between the song-like flow of the verse and the paradoxical or

ambiguous implications of the language (p.115). The assonance of the opening lines emphasises the puns on "vainly" and "amaze":

> How vainly men themselves amaze
> To win the Palm, the Oke, or Bayes
> (1-2)

Those who seek renown in the martial, athletic, civic or poetic spheres do so from a sense of vanity and, according to the values of the poet, in vain. Similarly, the word "amaze" suggests the confusion of such exploits as though to strive for worldly fame is akin to becoming lost in a labyrinth. These vain men also struggle incessantly for a very limited reward garnered from a "single Herb or Tree" (4) whose shadow is "short and narrow verged" (5). As Colie suggests, the narrowness of the shade offered by a single tree is a reproach to the men who achieve renown in a limited sphere (1970, p.148). The shade seems to reprove the men as it prudently chides their labours, "Does prudently their Toyles upbraid" (6). The word "Toyles" implies the hard work and labour which men have to perform to achieve fame, but when read in conjunction with "upbraids" suggests the futility of their efforts which are wreathed together into a garland of a single variety of leaf. In contrast the "Garlands of repose" (8) are made of "all Flow'rs" and "all Trees" (7), suggesting the wide variety of experience which has gone into their creation. It seems as if it is an innate function of the trees and flowers to grow into garlands to crown the head of the contemplative man.

In this first stanza we have been placed within the garden looking outwards to the world of ambition and frenetic activity. In depreciating the active life, the poet has praised the contemplative and undermined the value of what would normally be termed success. The light witty tone and conscious hyperbole serve to establish an alternative set of values by which the quality of the retired life will be judged. Every stanza in the poem is end-stopped and this gives the poem an epigrammatic quality as though in each individual stanza our gaze is focused on a different aspect of the garden.

From looking outward in the first stanza, our gaze, in the second, is directed to the personifications Quiet and Innocence who inhabit the garden. The "I" enters the poen unobtrusively, as the poet confesses his past folly of seeking quiet and innocence in the active world: "Mistaken long, I sought you then / In busie Companies of Men" (11-12). These lines describe the only really past and lost experience in the poem. Cook points out that tenses other than the present are very rare in the poem which works to achieve a sense of permanent present (p.163). Quiet and Innocence are depicted as goddesses of the garden and their heavenly plants will only grow among the plants already growing.

Marvell ends the stanza with an outrageous couplet:

> Society is all but rude,
> To this delicious Solitude.
>
> (15-16)

Instead of accepting the assumption that society has a civilising effect, the poet turns this on its head and suggests that society, in comparison with solitude, is barbarous. This witty paradox prepares us for the third stanza which celebrates the superiority of the garden to human love. The white and red of female skin and lips cannot compare with the garden's "lovely green" (18). The extravagant hyperbole of this statement prevents us from taking the poet too seriously and sets exactly the right frivolity of tone which allows us to enjoy the spectacle of foolish lovers carving their mistress' names on the bark of trees: "Fond lovers, cruel as their Flame, / Cut in these Trees their Mistress name" (19-20). The word "Flame" suggests not only the cruel mistress with whom the lover is infatuated, but also the heat of passion. For the poet, though, nothing can outshine the trees' beauty and the only name that he would ever cut into their bark would be their own: "Fair Trees! where s'eer your barkes I wound, / No Name shall but your own be found" (23-24).

The poet, though, has loved before, as stanza four makes clear. In the previous stanza Marvell described those lovers caught in the "flame" of mortal ardour, here he refers to what happens after passion is over: "When we have run our Passions heat, / Love hither makes his best retreat" (25-26). The first of these lines suggests both the heat of emotion engendered by passion and also the exertion of actually running a race. This latter meaning prepares us for the description of a race which is to follow. Love, then, retreats from the world of passion to the world of the garden. It is his "best retreat" because in the world of the garden he can find respite from the passions of the world beyond. The pun on "heat" is echoed in the lines

"The *Gods*, that mortal Beauty chase, / Still in a Tree did end their race" (27-28). With great economy the poet suggests the end of passion, the end of a contest of speed and, as Colie suggests, the gods themselves dying out as a race (1970, p.160). According to the poet, Apollo and Pan only chased Daphne and Syrinx so that they might become the plants they have been traditionally associated with. The women become the laurel and the reed and thus for the poet, who finds trees more beautiful than women, are made more attractive by their transformation.

Stanza five with its luxurious sensuality comes as a surprise after the asceticism of the preceding stanzas:

> What wond'rous Life in this I lead!
> Ripe Apples drop about my head;
> The Luscious Clusters of the Vine
> Upon my Mouth do crush their Wine;
> The Nectaren, and curious Peach,
> Into my hands themselves do reach;
> Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,
> Insnar'd with Flow'rs, I fall on Grass.
> (33-40)

Leishman believes that the first line of this stanza should read "is this" rather than "in this" and has stated that he "cannot imagine any really convincing defence of the appropriateness of 'in this'" (p.295n). "In this", however, seems to be more accurate as it conveys the sense of being *in* the garden, a framed world where the values and ways of the active sphere do not apply. It is *in* this world where green is more beautiful than red and white, where

girls are transformed into trees not as an escape from their pursuers, but as a reason for being pursued, and where animate fruit can simultaneously be seductive and innocent. Not only is the poet's life in the garden "wond'rous", but also the stanza itself. Whereas in *Bermudas* nature's bounty was animated by God, here the fruit itself becomes alive of its own volition and seeks to delight and charm the poet. The language is overwhelmingly sensual, but the gratification of the poet's senses is innocent and there is no hint of a temptation which will result in an Edenic fall from grace. A fall is described, but as Cook points out, this is not a fall *from* anything, but a fall *onto* and *into* a state of near identity with the natural world (p.164). Indeed the whole movement of the stanza is downwards, moving from the head-high apples, to the grapes which crush their juice into the poet's mouth, down further to the nectarine and peach which thrust themselves into his hands, to the melons which clutch at his feet and finally to the grass onto which he falls. This downward physical movement contrasts with the rising intensity of the emotion described, culminating in the ecstatic experience of the fall onto grass and ensnarement by the flowers.

In stanza six, the poet turns away from sensuous delights and concentrates on the mind:

> Mean while the Mind, from pleasure less,
> Withdraws into its happiness:
> The Mind, that Ocean where each kind
> Does streight its own resemblance find
> (41-44)

The mind withdraws from inferior pleasures into happiness. As Colie indicates, "the withdrawal of the poet's mind into its happiness is a withdrawal into the possibilities of its own creation" (1970, p.163). The mind is described as an ocean where each species immediately finds its mirror image. The source for this is in Pliny: "Whatsoever is engendered and bred in any part of the world beside is found in the sea", but Sir Thomas Browne in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (III. xxiv) also discusses the Vulgar Error "That all Animals of the Land, are in their kind in the Sea" (Margoliouth, p.268n). The vast variety of species in the ocean is hidden from view and this suggests the unseen activities of the mind itself. Like the garden the mind is a contained world and just as one can look beyond the frame of the garden to the "busie Companies of Men" (12), so too can the mind look beyond itself by the power of creation: "Yet it creates, transcending these, / Far other Worlds, and other Seas" (45-46). This is another way of moving beyond the frame. The ability of the mind to create frees it from all restrictions, it can transcend all existing "kinds" found on earth and in the seas, and create worlds and seas which do not exist.

The stanza ends with lines which have evoked considerable critical comment and various meanings for "green" have been suggested:

> Annihilating all that's made
> To a green Thought in a green Shade
> (47-48)

Such is the power of the mind to create that it can reduce the entire physical world to a single thought. As Colie indicates, the word "annihilating" cannot sustain the meaning of bringing to nothing, but in juxtaposition with the word "all" evokes the idea of God's original act of creation and suggests the final dissolution of the earth (1970, p.150). Similarly, "all that's made" suggests everything in existence in the material world, everything that was ever created, and it it is this that the mind can reduce to "a green Thought in a green Shade". The repetition of the word "green" is inspired. Not only does it convey the sense of thoughts being alive, both created and creating, but it also characterises the shade as having the same qualities.

So far Marvell has described the pleasures of the body in stanza five and the power of the mind in stanza six, now in stanza seven he moves higher up the intellectual ladder to depict the soul. At the side of a fountain, or at the base of a fruit tree, the "Bodies Vest" (51) is cast aside and the poet is literally disembodied. The soul is described as a bird:

> My Soul into the boughs does glide:
> There like a Bird it sits, and sings,
> Then whets, and combs its silver Wings;
> And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
> Waves in its Plumes the various Light.
> (52-56)

The ascent of the soul into the tree is in practice for its final longer flight to heaven. The use of the word "in" in the final line is interesting. The soul-bird does not reflect the light off its plumage, but draws the light into its

feathers as though the light and not the feathers were doing the waving. The effect heightens the sense of mystery and emphasises that the garden paradise is just a foretaste of the true heaven.

In stanza eight the poet light-heartedly recalls the prelapsarian world before mortal sin, or Eve, had entered the world. The "Garden-state" (57) was only "pure and sweet" (60) when Adam was its sole occupant. It is with some sense of shock that we return so abruptly to the ironic detached tone of the speaker after the descriptive beauty of the previous three stanzas. Marvell is playing with the idea that God's creation of a help-mate was unnecessary:

> Such was that happy Garden-state,
> While Man there walk'd without a Mate:
> After a Place so pure, and sweet,
> What other Help could yet be meet!
> (57-60)

There is some hint of a pun in the words "mate" and "meet" in the above lines. The opening alliterative "m" sound of the words links them as does the use of "Help" which we usually associate with the word "Mate". "Meet" means fitting, but the creation of Eve, according to the poet, was so inapt that it destroyed Adam's solitary paradise.

The jest is continued in the remaining four lines of the stanza:

> But 'twas beyond a Mortal's share

To wander solitary there:
Two Paradises 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone.
(61-64)

To occupy paradise in solitude was "beyond a Mortal's share" of happiness, but Eve was also, literally, a "Mortal's share" being pared from Adam's side. There is the sense that a lack of wholeness has led to a dilution of the joys of solitude. This effect is emphasised by the idea that to live in paradise alone would have given double pleasure.

In the final stanza we move from that which has been created to its creator. The retreat into the garden world has been a retreat into a timeless existence where the pleasures of the body, the mind and the soul have been enjoyed, but the garden also contains a highly artificial flower clock:

How well the skilful Gardner drew
Of flow'rs and herbes this Dial new;
Where from above the milder Sun
Does through a fragrant Zodiack run;
And, as it works, th' industrious Bee
Computes its time as well as we.
(65-70)

The clock reminds us that the garden may be a place of beauty and tranquillity, but it is also part of the world of time. To be reminded of the transience of life by a clock made of flowers is perhaps the most gentle reminder of all, but it is a reminder nonetheless. The dial is "new" because

it is constantly renewing itself as it grows and as the seasons change. With this constant renewing comes a feeling of hope for the future. The "sun" / "run" rhyme is familiar from the ends of *On a Drop of Dew* and *To his Coy Mistress* where it was used in both instances to hint at a promise of transcendence. The introduction of the bee, a symbol of activity, calls to mind the active world with which the poem began. The bee, though, measures time, as all in the garden do, by the flower clock and these hours are "wholsome" and reckoned with herbs and flowers. The garden may be part of the world of time, but this final stanza seems to suggest that all time, even that measured in flowers, is of no importance in comparison to eternity. Man is mortal and cannot ultimately transcend time even in the garden, but he can use his time in an earthly paradise to prepare for the journey beyond the frame to heavenly timelessness.

Of *The Garden* Colie writes: "This poem, like others but more than most, is container and thing contained, a container mirroring what is outside itself and mirroring itself also" (1970, p.173). It seems to me, though, that the garden container also allows the poet to hold up a mirror to heaven and reflect a realm of such perfection that it can only be perceived as a faint glimmer waving in the iridescence of the soul's plumage.

The Garden describes an enclosed world, but by means of imagination we can move beyond the frame to worlds of our own creation. The soul, too, can use the garden as a place to prepare itself for its journey to a realm beyond. Perhaps one of the most important words of the poem is "skilful" (65). The garden's creator used all his skill to create the flower

dial and, by implication, the garden itself. In *Upon Appleton House*, Fairfax's ancestor laid out a garden in sport as a reminder of his former military exploits: "But laid these Gardens out in sport / In the just Figure of a Fort" (285-286). A garden is a place in which to discover and rediscover truths about oneself and Man and to meditate a vision of the world. [9] In this poem, and in all the others I have discussed, the visions of the world offered by Marvell are based on the "just Figure". The figures are not only designed on sound geometric principles, but are also morally correct. Correct proportion implies virtue and humility and where these qualities are lacking, as in the convent in *Upon Appleton House* which was "Founded by Folly, kept by Wrong" (218), the lack is visually displayed as a deviation from justness.

[9] I am indebted to Professor Ruth Harnett for this point.

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